

Australian

# Wild

*bushwalking, ski touring  
canoeing and climbing magazine*

JULY/AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1981 NZ\$2.00 \$1.95

Ski touring and  
ice climbing in the  
Snowy Mountains

The untrdden  
Lake St Clair  
National Park

We talk to  
Geoff Mosley

White water!

Tents for  
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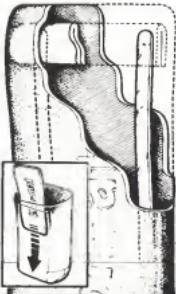
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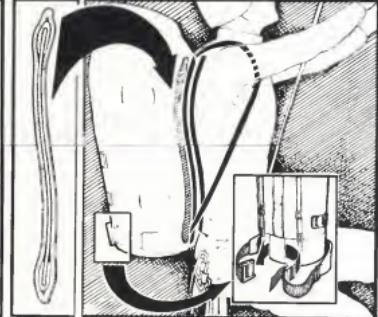


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**Cover** Louise Gilfedder has captured the feeling of winter in the high country with this photo of her sister Francine from the Razorback, a spectacular ridge of Mt Feathertop, Victoria.

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# Australian **Wild**

*bushwalking, skitouring,  
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July/August/September (Winter) 1981 Vol 1 No 1

NZ \$2.25\* \$1.95\*

'Every start upon an untrodden path is a venture which only in unusual circumstances looks sensible and likely to be successful.' Albert Schweitzer

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Steve Colman has been leading ski touring trips to this magnificent Snowy Mountains peak since 1977. In this feature he outlines the approaches and Trevor Lewis describes two contrasting experiences on Jagungal's frozen flanks.

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# The Wild Idea

## • WILD IS A NEW MAGAZINE FOR THOSE who enjoy the adventure of wild places.

The *Wild* idea sprang from the high country. It took shape over the past few years in discussion with other rucksack enthusiasts in Australia and New Zealand. Such is the understanding between bushwalkers, ski tourers, canoeists and climbers that a ready rapport comes naturally wherever they meet.

The idea has emerged as an initiative for a regular magazine of professional quality, written by and for those who actively participate - in the bush, mountains, wild rivers and caves of Australia and New Zealand.

*Wild* is a celebration of our wild places. It will be published regularly and will aim at a broad and interesting coverage of wilderness pursuits presented in a stimulating and lively fashion. It will give a balanced view of those activities and of the different wild regions of Australia.

As an independent publication, *Wild's* authority will stem from the contribution of active, experienced and well-known writers; its objectivity from a balanced presentation of divergent viewpoints and opinions. Its writers will include those who can breathe discovery and adventure into even well-known and accessible places.

Articles will feature pictures, personalities and reliable information. They will be supplemented and enlivened by personal experiences and the evaluation of gear, as well as contribution, photographs, comments and letters from readers.

*Wild* will recognize its duty to support the responsible preservation of distressingly scarce wild places. It will recognize also the urgent need to ensure that Australia's unique national heritage is preserved intact for future generations. In this, *Wild's* role will be educational. It will, however, not become obsessed by the politics of wilderness.

*Wild's* style will be crisp, clear and concise and it will aim to be accurate. It will be written and edited for active people who will be invited and encouraged to regard it as their own.

*Wild* will appear four times a year, in July, October, January and April; each issue will reflect seasonal activities. It will be distributed through

retailers in Australia and New Zealand and will be supplied on subscription, posted direct to the reader, anywhere in the world. You can help widen its circulation and enrich its readership by bringing it to the attention of your friends.



## • SUPPORT FOR A WILD IDEA HAS become a reality.

This has been made possible by the response of our contributors on one hand and our subscribers and advertisers on the other. The enthusiasm of both has been widespread and substantial. Its continuation will be vital to the magazine's future.

This, the first issue of *Wild*, goes to readers in Europe, Britain, North America and Asia. Closer to home it goes to places as far apart as the Northern Territory and Tasmania, from Parraburadoo in north-west Australia across the continent and the Tasman to New Zealand.

No editor could fail to respond to the enthusiastic encouragement and generous assistance received from people too numerous to mention here.

The physical quality and appearance of the magazine are the result of the professional skills of our contributing editors, graphic artist, typesetters and our printers.

The future development of *Wild* will depend on you, the reader, regarding it as your own magazine. We will welcome your comments and suggestions, and your frank criticisms. With your continuing support we will try to make *Wild* a worthy celebration of our wild places.

Chris Baxter  
Editor and Publisher

JULY/AUG/SEPT 1981



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Summit ridge of Mt Cook  
photo by Glenn Tempest



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# Information

• **Cliff Dweller.** One of America's outstanding rockclimbers has been visiting Australia's eastern states in recent months. Mike Graham, accompanied by his girlfriend, Wendy, first sampled Australian climbing early last year during a short visit. In that visit, Mike demonstrated his ability by repeating a number of hard rockclimbs in both New South Wales and Victoria. The highlight of that successful visit, however, was his first ascent of the fierce wall climb *Ride Like the Wind* (grade 26) at Victoria's Mt Arapiles. Mike commented at the time that it was one of the most demanding rockclimbs he had done: quite a statement considering he has climbed at the top standard in Britain and the United States.

Mike began climbing in southern California at the famous climbing grounds of Tahquitz and Suicide Rocks during the early 1970s. Not long after, he began to concentrate his climbing on Yosemite Valley, possibly the most outstanding and highly developed rockclimbing area in the world. Here he became a leading figure in the free climbing movement. Since then, Mike has found the travel



bug hard to resist and has visited a number of the world's major climbing areas.

Today Mike runs his own business as a contracting softgoods manufacturer for Chouinard, based in Ventura, California. Usually quiet and softly spoken, Mike's eyes light up at the mention of his highly specialized collapsible single-point climbing hammock called the Cliff Dwelling.

This and the two-man version, the Fortress, are remarkable 'portable ledges' that are now being used throughout the world by serious big wall climbers and alpinists. The Cliff



Mike Graham leading *No Exit*, a very difficult climb (grade 26) at Mt Arapiles. Photos Tempest

Dwelling folds compactly and weighs just over seven pounds. Although this is quite a substantial weight when compared to the usual nylon hammock, its ease of assembly, comfort and complete protection against the elements make the extra weight well worthwhile.

During our conversations it became obvious that Mike and Wendy were keen to visit some of our better beaches. Despite Mike's eagerness to get back on to rock, they felt that a little surfing and skindiving wouldn't do them any harm! For Mike, the trips to Australia have fulfilled a dream that

he has had from a very early age. Undoubtedly he will become a regular visitor to Australia's flourishing climbing scene which is becoming increasingly popular with climbers throughout the world.

In fact, there may be a flood of overseas climbers visiting Australia following the feature on Mt Arapiles in the prestigious international magazine *Mountain* in which it was described as 'The most concentrated and varied rock climbing area in the world . . . and ' . . . quite simply the finest cliff in the world.'

Glenn Tempest



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**Pidsley Bros**, 50 Capper St, Tumut 2720.

### The Palawan Expedition

The Palawan Expedition explores and researches one of the most remote wilderness areas in Asia.

Palawan is the westernmost island of the Philippines. It is the home of unique flora and fauna. Fascinating mountain tribesmen inhabit the rugged inland mountains. An archipelago of 1769 islands and islets surround the island. The island is honeycombed with caves that were once used as burial sites by a people that bury their dead in clay jars.

In second year, the Expedition has explored massive cave systems and the huge seven-kilometre underground river. A land-use study of the island has commenced and an environmental impact paper on the effect of tourism is being prepared for the use of the Palawan government.

The third year, 1982, will therefore be a busy period in order to follow up the results

of the first two expeditions. No special qualifications are necessary to join the Expedition but members are expected to contribute to the overall research purpose.

Departures and activities for 1982 are as follows:

Jan 4 Exploration of St Paul's Underground River and Pagoda Cliffs. Feb 1 Survey of the Calamian Group of Islands to the north of Palawan.

Apr 3 Marine Survey of a number of coral beauty spots in the Palawan group.

May 8 Palawan trek down the west coast of the island.

May 8 Underwater highlights of some of the most beautiful dive areas in the Philippines.

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Approximately 170,000 square kilometres in size, the island has barely 20 kilometres of road. Most rivers are navigable only by small boats in the rainy season so that the only forms of transport are coastal boats and walking. This combination of size and inaccessibility has preserved Seram as a tropical wilderness.

The Seram Survey is for those interested in ecology, marine life, bushwalking and conservation. Specialist activities for zoologists, botanists, speleologists, anthropologists, entomologists

and mountaineers will be arranged according to demand. Departs Sydney: 13 Sept 1981



All enquiries should be directed to **TRADITIONAL EXPLORATIONS** Box C342 Clarence St. Sydney, 2000. Phone (02) 29 5871 29 7029 or to the respective Programme Coordinators:

**Seram Survey**  
Geoff Reynolds, 46 Henry St. Carlton NSW 2218 Phone 588 6790

**Palawan Expedition**  
Harry Coleman, 24 Chamberlain St. Narwee 2209 Phone 53 8337



*The Franklin River, a feature of one of the world's last great wilderness regions. Bob Brown*

• **Tasmanian Wilderness Developments.** The debate over the fate of the South-west Tasmanian wilderness rages on. The issue is likely to dominate the national media headlines as Australia's greatest environment battle in the coming years.

By July 1980, the campaign to preserve the Franklin River, Australia's last great wild river, from plans for a giant hydro-electric scheme, had reached fever pitch. Ten thousand people marched in Hobart's streets behind banners calling for 'No More Dams in South-west Tasmania' and opinion polls showed that the majority of Tasmanians felt the same way. On 11 July 1980 the Tasmanian Government announced its compromise decision; a Wild Rivers National Park to save the Franklin River, and the Gordon-above-Olga dam which would flood the Lower Gordon and Denison Rivers. Then, the Tasmanian Upper House blocked the Government's legislation, resulting in a stalemate. Meanwhile, opinion polls show Tasmania's support for the 'no more dams' option has increased markedly. This bodes well for the campaign to save the majestic Gordon Splits and the Denison River from the floodwaters of the Gordon-above-Olga scheme.

However, the honeymoon between the conservation movement and the Tasmanian Government soured when the Premier, Mr Doug Lowe, announced the Wild Rivers National Park boundaries in March 1981 – the park's area had been cut by one third! Plans are also well advanced for clear-felling of the south-eastern forests of the South-west and for mining exploration over most of the wilderness outside the South-west National Park – activities hardly fitting for an area that has been nominated for World

Heritage listing along with the Great Barrier Reef.

The Federal Government must become involved. But this will only happen if enough of us tell our Members of Parliament and the Prime Minister that all of the South-west must become a National Park. The battle for Tasmania's remaining wilderness will be fought, and won or lost, in the early 1980s.

*Bob Burton and Karen Alexander*



• **Gammons Under Threat.** The Gammons is one of South Australia's, and indeed Australia's most valuable desert mountain regions. But the future of this stark and beautiful area in the northern Flinders Ranges is in doubt.

It is now well over a year since the South Australian Government purchased Balcanona Station with a view to including it in the Gammons National Park. Balcanona includes what many regard as the most spectacular country in the Gammons. The Government's indecision has caused concern amongst bushwalkers, naturalists and conservationists. It is no secret that pastoral and mining com-

panies are interested in the area. Recent staff ceilings and funding cuts imposed on the National Parks and Wildlife Service add weight to speculation about the future of the Gammons and other National Parks.

*Quentin Chester*

• **Kangaroo Island Circumnavigation.** In the absence of any true local 'wild water', canoeists in South Australia are looking to the sea for their challenge.

This was demonstrated in fine style earlier this year when a party of four intrepid paddlers successfully circumnavigated Kangaroo Island in Nordkapp sea kayaks. The group comprising Peter Carter, John Hicks, David Nicolson and Mike Higginson completed their 382 kilometre round trip in 23 days, the first circumnavigation of the island. *Quentin Chester*

• **The Woman from Snowy River.** The recent filming of *The Man from Snowy River*, an Australian feature film, called for a scene where the heroine falls over a cliff on to a ledge to await rescue by 'the Man' using his stockwhip!

A rockclimbing woman was required to double for the leading actress in the scene, on a small ledge far above the ground on Mt Magdala in Victoria's rugged north-east.

Therese Gilfedder, assisted by another woman climber, Natalie Green, was signed up, fitted with a wig and flowing skirts, and belayed into position for the filming of the 'maiden in distress'. Apparently it went off without a hitch except that most of the camera crew was too horror-stricken to watch!

*Natalie Green*



• **Australians in the Himalayas.** At least six Australian Himalayan expeditions are currently in the field or planned for this year.

Of particular interest is the strong New South Wales expedition leaving in August. Led by Lincoln Hall, they hope to attempt two unclimbed peaks in remote north-west China - Mt Anyemaqen (7300 or 6300 metres, depending on your source) and Mt Jinyu. The expedition also includes Tim McCartney-Snape who, in 1978, became the first Australian to climb a significant Himalayan peak with a remarkable solo summit dash on Dunagiri. Famous British climber Doug Scott was also to have been in the team but recently withdrew.

Two other Australians, well-known climbing entrepreneur Rick White and young Sydney climber Greg Child, will be part of an international expedition to the Gangotri area of the western Himalayas with Scott earlier in the year.

Nearby Trisul is the object of an expedition including Pat Conaghan, a prominent climber from the early 1960s, with Graham Hardy and Ron Farmer from Brisbane.

In the Mt Everest region, two small but most worthwhile peaks are being attempted by Australians. A party including Hall and McCartney-Snape, and led by Sydney climber Ken McMahon, is attempting spectacular Ama Dablam. McMahon compiled a book on Australian and New Zealand climbing to help finance the expedition. Joe Friend and Rick Jamieson are leading a mixed instructional and climbing group to Pumori.

The Russians are to attempt a new route on Everest in the spring of 1982. It appears that the chosen line is near the British south-west face route. It is particularly noteworthy that the Russians, who have never climbed an 8000-metre peak, are trying a new route on the highest one.

• **Himalayan Tragedy.** Queensland climber David Sloane was killed in an avalanche on Ganesh IV. David was a member of the Australian Army expedition led by Fritz Schaumburg which was unsuccessful in its attempt on the peak. Australians have died on four Himalayan expeditions in less than 18 months.

• **Explorers Fund.** This fund was established following the deaths of four climbers, members of the Australian Expedition to Annapurna III, last year. It was set up 'to promote exploratory expeditions' to '... the primitive regions of the world.' To qualify, expeditions must benefit the Australian community and further promote scientific study, preservation and conservation of primitive areas.

Applications for assistance from the Fund and/or further details should



Mt Anyemaqen in remote north-west China - Australian objective.



be made to The Explorers Fund, PO Box 323, Spit Junction, NSW 2088.

• **Balls Pyramid.** This spectacular 600-metre spire rising from the Pacific Ocean near Lord Howe Island is to be the object, in November, of the first Japanese-Australian climbing expedition, led by Victorian canoeist and climber Earle Bloomfield. Six Japanese and several Australians, possibly including Dave Witham, who was a member of the party which first climbed the Pyramid in 1965, will approach in a ketch from Sydney.

• **The Gammons Again.** Just as we were preparing to go to press, the South Australian branch of the Tasmanian Wilderness Society called a public meeting in Adelaide to force the South Australian Government to act on the Gammon Ranges.

At that meeting the Environment Minister announced that the present Gammon Ranges National Park is to be increased five-fold, to 98,500 hectares. The reaction to this news was tempered, however, by the knowledge that mining exploration may continue in the area.

Callum McEachern

## AT LAST!

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# Wild Ideas

## The First Step

• **EVERY YEAR, AUSTRALIANS OF ALL AGES** go into the bush for the first time. Many others would like to experience the wilderness, but are often prevented from doing so by not knowing how to start. Future issues of *Wild* will feature special articles for novice bushwalkers. Meanwhile, here are a few suggestions to help you get started...

Some excellent books on bushwalking have been written by Australians in recent years. Your local library should be able to help. However, the best source is probably the major outdoors shops specialising in bushwalking equipment. (Many of these shops are listed in the Suppliers Directory in this issue.) *Wild* will review significant books in each issue. Some of these will be particularly relevant to the needs of beginners.

However, most bushwalkers would agree that there is no substitute for the experience of walking. Even seasoned walkers will admit that they continue to pick up ideas on almost every trip.

If you know an experienced bushwalker don't be afraid to ask for help. Most bushwalkers have a sense of gratitude for what the bush has given them, and are pleased to help introduce others to it. Hopefully you can find a walker who will not only give helpful suggestions about basic equipment and food but will also take you walking. You may even be able to borrow some gear. You will learn a great deal on your first trip, and you can quickly build on that experience.

Another possibility is to join a bushwalking club. You can readily contact those in your area through your state's Federation of (Bush) Walking Clubs which is normally listed in the telephone directory of your state's capital city under your state's name (eg Queensland Federation of Bushwalking Clubs) or under 'Federation...'. Bushwalking shops can also put you in touch with clubs.

You can, of course, just start on your own, or preferably, with two or three friends. Don't underestimate the experience that can be gained on even a half-day walk. It will tell you a lot about your fitness, comfortable clothing and adequate footwear. You can soon extend this experience to a day walk, then to the challenge and satisfaction of your first night out. Give it a try!

Geoff Schirmer

# Contributors



**John Chapman** has bushwalked and climbed extensively in Australia for over ten years. An engineering graduate of bedraggled appearance, he soon left that profession for the mountains. He is now a professional bushwalking guide in Tasmania, and in Nepal.

One of his special interests is Tasmania. He has written one guide book, *South West Tasmania*, and co-authored another titled *Cradle Mountain National Park*. His most recent work is a full-colour book of photographs, *Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park*. He has also photographed the bushlands for many years, illustrating his own books and exhibiting his photos in international exhibitions in Australia and overseas.

**Steve Colman** has been guiding and instructing in the Snowy Mountains for several years. With his wife Heather he runs Wilderness Expeditions which he started in 1977. Through it he has introduced many people to



cross country skiing on Australia's highest peaks and canoeing the most magnificent rivers that flow from them.

Despite an unlikely start as an economics graduate, Steve has walked and climbed in Nepal, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea and recently completed the first kayak descent of the Watut River in Papua New Guinea.

**Joe Friend** is a colourful and controversial character who, among many other things, was editor of the now defunct Australian climbing magazine *Thrutch*.

When not fighting running battles with 'bush bureaucrats' or producing guide books that have the knack of stirring up a torrent of comment, he is a guide and mountaineering instructor in Australia and overseas. He does this through his own company which also sells mountaineering equipment and books.

In fact, there seem to be few mountain 'pies' in which Joe does not have a finger!

**Jutta Hessel** was introduced to the outdoors by her parents with walks in Germany's Harz Mountains and Black Forest.

After she qualified as a Master of Photography in Frankfurt, her work as a professional photographer took her into the mountains in many parts of Europe and Scandinavia.



Jutta migrated to Australia in the 1960s and, quite by chance, became involved in the Australian Antarctic expeditions. From 1969 until early this year she was chief photographer of the Antarctic Division.

In 1976 she was in the first group of women from the Antarctic Division to land on the Antarctic mainland. She has visited Antarctica several times and is working on a book of photos on Antarctica which is due for release next November.

An active walker and ski tourer, Jutta has published a book on Australian wildflowers and contributed to numerous Australian nature and

conservation publications.

**Trevor Lewis** spent the earliest years of his life in South Africa. Shortly after arriving in Australia, relatives took him to Echo Point Lookout in the Blue Mountains, where he got lost in childish fantasies of wandering those endless blue ranges and ochre-walled canyons forever...

Since then he has walked extensively in Australia, New Zealand and Nepal.

Since leaving school he has been a university student, fruit picker, agricultural labourer, public servant, gardener, kitchen hand, cleaner, freelance silk-screen printer, builder's labourer and powder monkey's offsider. He is presently a student of professional writing at the Canberra College of Advanced Education.

**Cary Pedicini** became interested in canoeing while an industrial design student in Melbourne. He has worked in outdoor pursuits in centres and schools in the UK and Australia.

He is a qualified senior instructor with the Australian Canoe Federation and is a professional instructor and Development Officer with the Victorian Board of Canoe Education.

Cary has led many advanced canoe trips and was deputy leader of the 1981 Australian Himalayan Kayak Expedition.

**Geoff Schirmer** has always enjoyed the freedom and beauty of the bush. As a boy he spent many week-ends wandering in the hills of the Barossa Valley. He became even more fascinated by the outdoors after visiting the Flinders Ranges.

He was attracted to rockclimbing at the age of 35 and has become widely recognised as a climbing photographer and writer.

In recent years Geoff has extended bushwalking into cross country skiing with many trips to Victoria's Bogong High Plains.

He is married with three children and is Chaplain at a Melbourne college.

Apart from his interest in the outdoors and photography, Geoff is a Principal Tenor with Opera Melbourne.

**Brian Walters** is a solicitor living in Bairnsdale, Victoria, a handy base for trips in the Victorian and New South Wales Alps, large areas of which he has covered on skis or on foot. He has been involved in running adventure camping programmes for several years.

Brian's academic qualifications include an Arts degree with an English major, and his interests in photography, films, literature and music – as well as Australia's wild places – make him well suited to edit *Wild's* media reviews.

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• THESE MOUNTAINS ARE A LONG way from the primeval cataclysms of fire and ice which raised them high above the surrounding country. Time, weather and running water have worn them down to an undulating plateau which slopes almost imperceptibly into the Monaro Tableland to the east and plunges, a little more dramatically, into the Murray Valley to the west. The summer walker in the northern Snowy Mountains finds another variation on the theme of Australian open spaces; a huge natural park, landscaped with belts of snowgum, flower-studded fields, myriad sparkling streams, rock gardens and miniature waterfalls. The winter traveller finds something else; a stark, surreal landscape like a frozen desert, with the snow burning bright in the sunshine and the corniced ridge-tops rising all around like giant sand dunes.

The summits, Kosciusko, Twynam, Tate and the rest are little more than hilltops. Only the endless panorama of mountain range upon mountain range stretching into the hazy distance and the sparse, stunted vegetation cowering against the blast of the wind which can chill you to the bone even in midsummer remind you that these hilltops are Australia's highest. But away on the northern horizon crouches a sprawling hog's back of a mountain . . . Jagungal. This is the peak which, more than the higher and better-known summits of the Main Range, symbolises the 'high country' – certainly to those who travel it on foot or ski. It's remote; at least a day's trek from the nearest vehicular access. All who travel there need to be self-sufficient, able to navigate, and equipped for survival under weather conditions which regularly claim lives.

From the top, if you disregard the odd fire trail sneaking through the snowgum savannah far below, you have to look a long way to see the marks of modern civilisation. You can approach it from the north, clambering over precariously tilted rock pavements and jagged boulder fields. Or you can take it by surprise from the south, ambling up a long ramp of springy turf until the summit's only a short scramble away over the gnarled black volcanic rock.

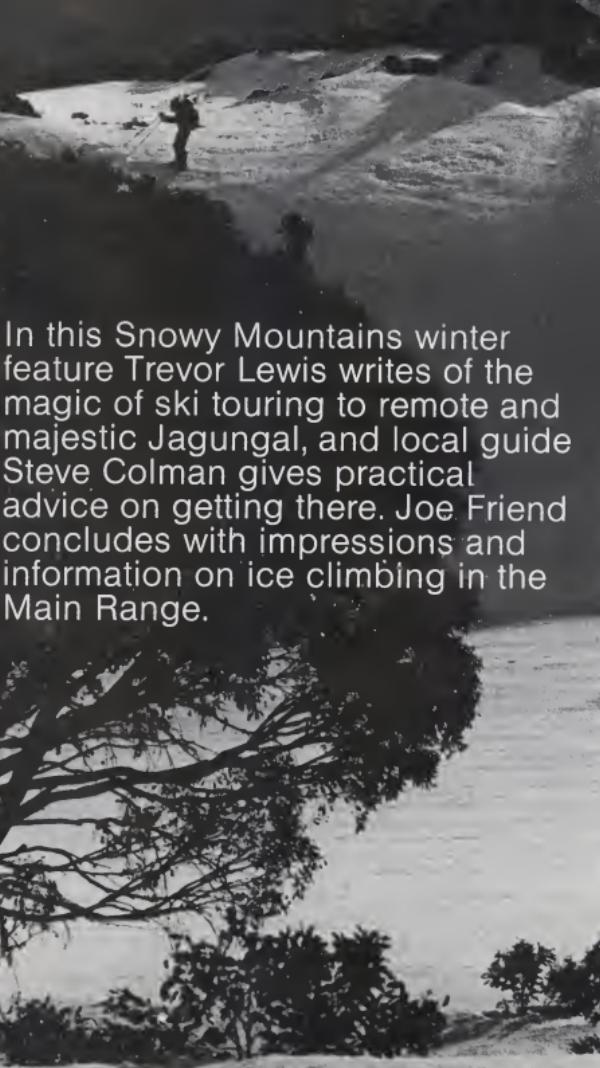
A first summer encounter can disappoint just a little. After all, it's only a big, big hill with flocks of crows wheeling overhead, breaking the stillness with their hoarse cries. But in winter it's never less than a perfect, sculptured facsimile of an alpine peak, ice-encrusted outcrops gleaming in the sunshine and the silence of the snow-fields all around you.

Having reached the top, the journey's climax awaits you. Jagungal gives the skier a satisfactorily long unbroken descent with room for all

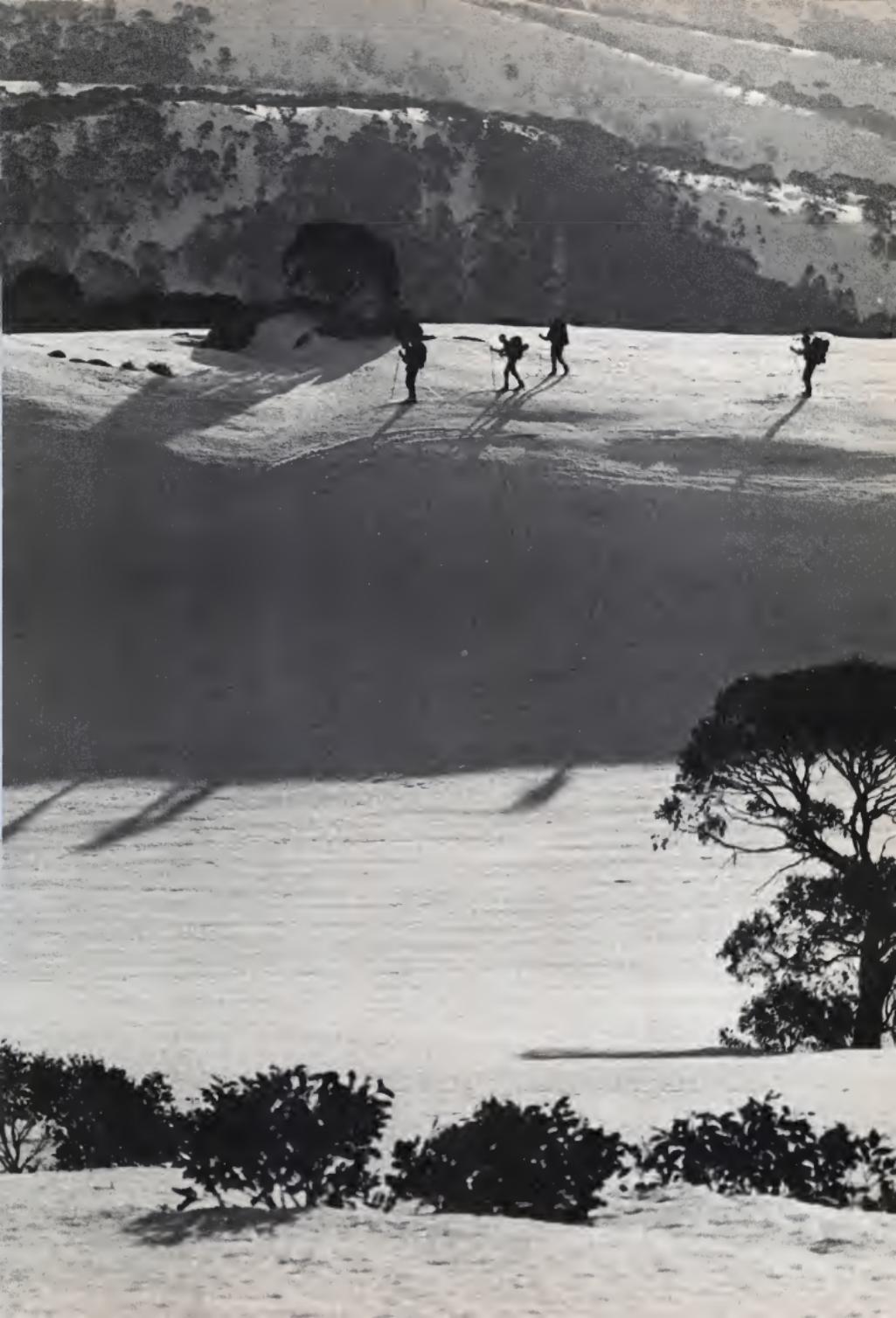
*The way to Jagungal, near Valentines Hut.*  
Andrew Jackson

# Jagungal

## A Winter Wilderness



In this Snowy Mountains winter feature Trevor Lewis writes of the magic of ski touring to remote and majestic Jagungal, and local guide Steve Colman gives practical advice on getting there. Joe Friend concludes with impressions and information on ice climbing in the Main Range.





levels of ability. Even the most timid skier can manage a few swoops and turns on his way down the Southern Ramp, while the North-western Face offers scope to those who enjoy carving hair-raising trails down precipitous mountainsides spiked with dead snowgums.

Among many days spent skiing Jagungal and the surrounding region, a few stand out. Like the one which found a couple of friends and I skiing away from Grey Mare early one morning, the snow crystals glittering like a thousand tiny flashing lights. Jagungal's crest jutted above the rolling skyline, luring us onward. The weather had always prevented me from reaching the mountain in winter before, but today was clear and windless in the wake of a blizzard which had left the countryside feet thick in powder. We strode across open valleys, threaded our way between snowgums weighed down under great clumps of snow and ice. We lost the mountain for a while, then slid out on to Tooma River flats to rediscover it towering right above, a massive white hump shrugging itself free of the trees which crowd its lower slopes.

## We strode off through the phantom snowgums, goblins out for a midnight rage on their long skinny sliding shoes.

Into the trees we ventured, side-stepping our way upwards among the rustle and slither of snow particles shed by sun-warmed branches. We emerged on to the crest of the Southwest Spur and left the last snowgums behind as we traversed across to the Southern Ramp. Onwards and upwards we trudged, pausing to shed clothing as sweat dripped and breath came in hoarse gasps.

We reached the summit and sprawled on the warm rocks. We let our eyes wander across the real-life topographic map spread out below, marvelling at the snow cover's extent. Even the distant brown Monaro Plains were flecked with white.

We'd hoped, as you always do, to have the mountain to ourselves. But soon we spied multi-coloured specks moving across the ramp below. They drew nearer, and turned out to be a

party from a nearby commercial lodge, an object of controversy among those dedicated to the preservation of Jagungal's wilderness character. Dressed to kill in tailor-made jumpsuits and knickerbockers, one of the men even sported a collar and tie. They confronted our crew, somewhat more casually attired in string singlets, woolen underwear and cut-off-at-the-knee army surplus pants – not to mention grimy from several unwashed days.

But there are no class barriers in the wilderness. We chatted for a while, then it was time to go. 'See you people later, I've got to get back to civilisation in time to hand in my dole form . . .'

We left the summit to the day-trippers and hurtled off down the ramp in long, graceful swoops.

On another occasion we approached Jagungal from the east. Once again blizzards had left the high country deep in snow. We started out from Eucembene Dam and skied up to and across the Gungarlin River Plains, a long day's trek with much steady slogging and little downhill joy. We caught our first sight of Jagungal as we panted our way to the crest of Cesjacks Ridge late in the afternoon. From this angle the shapely summit is invisible, hidden behind the sprawling bulk of the Eastern Spur.

We descended to Doubtful River valley, found a site and set to work pitching tents and gathering firewood. Cooking and eating done, we sat around talking. But as our fire turned to embers, our eyes were drawn to an aura on the horizon . . . moonrise. Silver light swept across the frozen wastes and shafted through the lattice-work of snowgum branches. We suddenly realised the night was yet young. We swapped duvet boots for ski boots and strode off through the phantom snowgums, goblins out for a midnight rage on their long skinny sliding shoes.

Jagungal's eastern bulwark loomed ahead like a frozen tidal wave. We climbed smoothly, easily, the new snow giving perfect grip to blue-stick-waxed skis. We paused to look back over the terrain we'd traversed and every valley, every clump of trees were sharply delineated in the moonshine. Away in the east blinked the lights of Cooma Airport, just to remind us that civilisation still existed.

## I found myself taking risks I'd never taken before.

We reached the first false summit and found ourselves in a grey half-world of swirling cloud, sheet ice, and

half-buried boulders. To attempt the summit was useless, so we pointed our skis back downward. A little cautiously at first, then letting go as ice gave way to powder. Swooping, swerving, dodging boulders and snowgums. Nearly losing it, and getting it back together just in time, as skis lurched across invisible moguls or slithered on the odd ice patch. In the surreal light I felt inhibitions vanish, found myself taking risks I'd never taken before . . . and travelled the distance without a single fall.

I felt no cold, yet by the time we reached our tents my beard was thick with ice. •

# Getting There

• **JAGUNGAL.** AN ABORIGINAL WORD meaning 'mother of the waters' is also the name of an isolated and spectacular peak in the heart of the Kosciusko National Park. The area surrounding Jagungal, a plateau between 1500 and 1800 metres above sea level, is designated wilderness. Several rivers rise on Jagungal's flanks and wander across the plateau before plunging into deep valleys and gorges, mainly on the plateau's western margin.

The vegetation found in the Jagungal wilderness ranges from treeless alpine grassland on the mountain heights to dense wet sclerophyll forest on the lower slopes.

**When to Ski Jagungal.** Predicting snow conditions is as hard as winning the lottery. However skiing is usually possible between late June and early October, except in those occasional (but not exceptional) years when the blizzards arrive late or the thaw arrives early. Late August and early September provide the optimum conditions; the snow cover is at its heaviest, and the days are starting to lengthen.

**Maps.** The Kosciusko 1:100,000 sheet (No. 8525) provides the best overall coverage. Adjoining sheets from the same series will be handy if you are skiing from the northern or eastern access points.

The most detailed map of the central area is the *Mt Jagungal and the Brassy Mountains* sheet compiled and drawn by Tim Lamble. Alagona Guides produce a map entitled *Guthega Power Station-White's River-Mt Jagungal* which is a little short on fine topographic detail but includes useful track notes.

**Huts.** The huts of the high country were established by those who travelled the region in its pre-wilderness days; stockmen, miners and Snowy



*Jagungal: alone in the frozen wastes.*



*Camp on Strawberry Hill, Mail Box behind.*



Mountains Authority workers. They are maintained to varying degrees. The most popular huts in the Jagungal area include White's River, Schlink 'Hilton', Grey Mare, Mawson, Tin and Cesjacks. At the height of the winter season they are often very crowded and it is unwise to completely rely on them for accommodation.

Cooking in most huts is on fuel stoves or open fires. The environs of many huts are being despoiled by the

search for firewood. If you want to help preserve the area's natural beauty, carry your own cooking stove.

**Snow Camping.** Snow camping is possible almost anywhere in the region. A tent gives the ski tourer the ultimate in freedom and flexibility. You should, however, be sure that your equipment and experience are adequate for frequent and unexpected extremes in weather.

**Winter Access.** From the south there are three main access points reached by driving along the main Smiggins/Perisher Road and taking the turnoff to Island Bend and Guthega.

The most scenic access route starts at the end of the road, from Guthega Village itself. But you'll only use this route in fine weather. The main 'trade route' starts from Guthega Power Station and follows a Snowy Mountains Authority road (usually well snow-covered by midwinter) up the Munyang Valley to Schlink Pass. An alternative route to Schlink Pass also starts from the power station and follows a track up Disappointment Spur, then along an SMA aqueduct which joins the road shortly below White's River Hut.

The third access route from the Snowy River valley follows a trail up the Burrugubugge River (whata name!). From Island Bend, take a dirt road down the valley about four kilometres to a concrete bridge spanning the Snowy River (or what's left of it after the SMA has taken its share). From this point you usually have to walk a little distance to the beginning of skiable snow. In a good winter this is the preferred route if you want to avoid the crowds.

Access from the east is dependent on snow conditions: you might find yourself facing a long walk to the snowline. The route from Eucembene Dam follows the Happy Jack's Road for some distance into the hills and then cuts across the Gunbarlin River Plains towards Jagungal.

Various tracks also lead directly up into the 'non-national park' high country of Gunbarlin River Plains. These are usually only open to four-wheel-drive vehicles.

I have never skied in from the west (Khancoban). On the map it looks long and difficult, but probably worth some investigation and effort.

Northern access follows the 'classic' route from Kiandra, Mt Selwyn is the usual starting point. In some seasons this route is a little light on snow and you may find yourself shovelling skis for a trudge across Happy Jack's Plain. (Whatever happened to the winters of the pioneers?) The Cabramurra-Khancoban Road is closed in winter.

**Safety.** It all comes down to common sense. However, there are a few points worth noting.

- Much of the Jagungal Wilderness is high plateau, very exposed in bad weather. So be aware of hypothermia: its causes, prevention and treatment.
- Huts are not always easy to find, especially in bad weather. They may already be full so carry a suitable tent.
- Notify the Park rangers at Sawpit Creek of your trip plans.

**The Basic Route Guide.** The most commonly travelled route to Jagungal is from Guthega Village/Power Station. This tour would normally take three or four days: longer if side trips (Grey

Mare Range, Pretty Plains, Brassy Mountains) are taken.

From Guthega Village, ski down to and across the dam which holds back the waters of Guthega Pongage. Ascend the well-defined spur which climbs in a northerly direction to Guthega Trig. Continue north from the trig on to the Rolling Grounds, a treeless, undulating plateau which commands wonderful views in every direction. You may need to take a compass bearing before heading across the Rolling Grounds, especially if the weather seems dubious.

You can descend into Whites River valley, or stay high for a little longer and descend directly into the saddle at Schlink Pass. (Schlink Pass is about ten kilometres from Guthega.)

One and a half kilometres from the pass, following the SMA road northward, is the Schlink 'Hilton', a large SMA hut, part of which is open to the public. The scenic way to go from Schlink is across the Kerries, an expanse of high hills and valleys. Leaving the hut, ascend in a north-easterly direction until you reach the tops. Then ski on a bearing, gradually descending to the Valentines River at its Big Bend. Mawsons Hut is nearby, a cosy hut with two rooms, an alcove, and a space-age toilet. It is often very crowded. It is six kilometres from Schlink 'Hilton' to Mawsons.

Looking out from the front door of the hut, the rest of the route to Jagungal is obvious. Cross Valentines River, then work your way up and around the western side of Cup and Saucer Hill. This allows you to drop into the head of a creek which flows north into the Geehi. Ski up the Geehi valley and before you know where you are, you will be standing proudly on the summit. Having admired the view, you may care to carve a few turns in the snowbowl to the north.

You can vary your route back to Mawsons by skiing over Strawberry Hill. Similarly, you can vary your route back to Schlink by following Valentines River to its source near Tin Hut, crossing Gungarten Pass and descending the creek valley beyond. This takes you straight to the hut.

Gungarten Pass is difficult to find in bad weather, in which case the preferred alternative is to follow Valentines River downstream to its junction with Duck Creek. Follow the general course of a fire trail up the Duck Creek Valley, across a low saddle to meet the Schlink Pass Road two kilometres north of the hut.

You can retrace your outward route across the Rolling Grounds, or simply follow the road down to Guthega Power Station, six kilometres down-valley from Guthega Village. The latter route is a safer way to go in the case of bad weather or poor visibility on the tops.

Have a good tour! •

# Climbing Ice

• NEAR THE ROOF OF MT KOSCIUSKO'S Main Range are two of the best snow and ice climbing areas in mainland Australia. There are other steep slopes and corniced ridges in the high country, yet none has the appeal and popularity of Blue Lake and its 'wild cousin' Watsons Crags, commonly called 'The Crags'.

Neither location provides 'dead vertical' ice for any great length, but they certainly are stimulating for the first time, and a great work-out for the New Zealand Alps.

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Bill Blunt on 70° water ice at Blue Lake. Ross Vining

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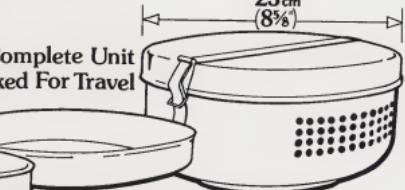
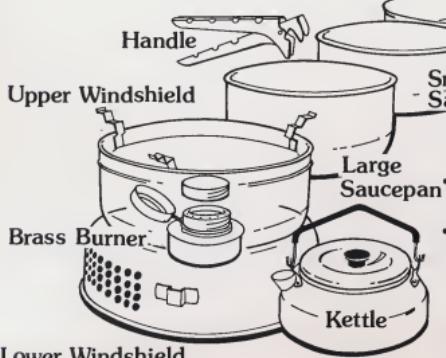
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Note: There are three Trangia models, reference numbers 25, 25K (with kettle), 27 and 27K (with kettle).

Model 25K is illustrated. Dimensions: Models 25 & 25K: 23 cm x 11 cm. Models 27 & 27K: 19 cm x 10 cm.

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Watsons Crags is an outstanding area, far from the madding crowds. You can actually climb for a day there in silence. This is a wild place, not for the uninitiated.

To make any venture to The Crags worth while, it is wise to plan for a full day or more, with a bivouac or igloo-building exercise thrown in for the evening or afternoon . . . the sun quickly drops behind the immaculate wide horizon.

Compared to the one- and two-pitch routes of Blue Lake's surrounds, The Crags offer full 300-metre mixed rock and ice climbs of more even angle (up to 50°), with numerous near-parallel couloirs and fluffy aretes in the upper quarter.

Climbs are not named, although some are possibly worthy of record. There are about ten good 'lines' but none of them is outstanding.

The appeal lies in the atmosphere and loneliness of the place, particularly mid-week when most other climbers are 'doing their nine-to-five'.

The Snowy Mountains Authority hut below and west of Watsons Crags, just below the tree-line, is recommended if you wish to climb only on The Crags. Drive from Khancoban to Olsen's Lookout, through the tunnel at the end of the road, then follow a contoured walking track (one hour) through forest.

Alternatively, from Guthega car-park, ski (four hours), snow shoe or walk (six hours with full packs), sidling up from Illawong Lodge on the Snowy River, being careful, if you want to visit Blue Lake, not to go too high up Mt Twynam.

From Charlottes Pass it is one and a half hours' walk north, down to and over the Snowy River, to Blue Lake, then another half hour from above the Lake to The Crags.

A useful reference is the second edition of the guide book *Climbing in the Snowy Mountains*, published by the University of New South Wales Mountaineering Club. The Kosciusko 1:100,000 sheet is a good map of the area. •



Climbers in Stag Gully, Blue Lake. Photos, Bryan Palmer, above, and Tony McGarn.



Across the Sentinel to Watsons Crags: a wild place, not for the uninitiated. Friend



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# MOUNTAINS

# Paddling the Himalayas

The Australian Himalayan Expedition's Gary Pedicini writes how they found that they had more at stake than just a wetting when they set out to make the first descent of Nepal's raging Sun Kosi river.



● BY THE END OF THE FIRST DAY, with four boats and two paddles damaged as well as a few narrow escapes from personal injury, the Upper Sun Kosi had already showed that it was every bit the challenge that we had hoped or feared it would be.

It was evening on 2 January 1981 as the support vehicles brought the last of the expedition back to base camp, five kilometres below Dharapani on the old China road. The months of planning and training, and the slow build-up were suddenly forgotten as we inspected boat damage and prepared ourselves for the next day of the most nerve-racking yet exhilarating canoeing any of us had ever experienced. The Sun Kosi or 'River of Gold' was no longer a distant unknown quantity, but a startling reality, thundering menacingly below us as we made camp on the terraced hillside in the shadow of the massive peaks of the Langtang Range.

Ten days previously, 22 canoeists from four countries had gathered in Kathmandu in preparation for the expedition which was to take us from the Nepalese borders of Tibetan China to India. The team was led by John Wilde, an experienced expedition paddler, who has represented both Australia and Britain in slalom competition canoeing and is now Director of Outdoor Education at a Tasmanian school. The expedition included two paddlers from Britain, one each from New Zealand and the USA, and 18 canoeists (including one woman) from Australia, forming the first team to attempt a descent of the entire Sun Kosi River, the first 50 kilometres of which had never been attempted.

A second and equally important aim of the expedition was to give young Australian canoeists a taste of expedition paddling and the opportunity to experience 'white water' conditions not known in Australia: a training expedition which will hopefully lead to similar ventures.

The Sun Kosi was the logical choice for such an expedition. Canoeing the first seven days of the most technically difficult and dangerous water could be assisted by vehicle support from the old China road which runs beside the river for most of the 50 kilometres. For the lower Sun Kosi below Dolkha we were to have support from 18-foot Metzeler rafts carrying supplies and equipment.

Five days of training on the Tresuli river west of Kathmandu had sharpened our reflexes and boosted our confidence in the team members with whom we were to paddle. The expedition was to operate in four separate groups, each responsible for its own members and operating as a self-sufficient unit in terms of rescue and

*Expedition leader John Wilde taking the plunge. All uncredited photos Trevor Pinder. Colour photos and diagrams courtesy Nomad Films International Pty Ltd.*



emergency equipment.

The first day had tested to the limit those of us who had attempted this mighty Sun Kosi river. The early morning scene had been tense as John Wilde, John Lockie, Mike Wood, Neil McGilp, myself and the two Englishmen, Stuart Wagstaff and Andy Hall, entered the river at Tatopani, the most practical put-in point near the Chinese border.

The most nerve-racking yet exhilarating canoeing any of us had ever experienced.

As I stood on the swaying footbridge spanning the foaming river below, the growing apprehension and nervousness made it impossible to think clearly and logically or to plan carefully the first few metres of my route down the boulder-strewn river. There was no easy section on which to warm up or to build up confidence, only one eddy behind a large rock which served as a put-in point, from which to be catapulted into unrelenting Grade Four and Five waters. A few seconds later, and fifty metres down river, I was still in my boat desperately trying to stay in a small eddy which offered some respite from the chaos of the river rushing past. I had been forced to eskimo roll twice and was not quite sure of exactly which route I had taken; but as the adrenalin rush began to subside I knew I had broken that first and most important barrier and could continue and maybe even enjoy this madness!

We were soon to realize that the slightest error or hesitation could mean a capsiz, the consequences of which ranged from a head-splitting momentary dip in the icy waters, to

*Meeting the locals, photo Pedicini, and below, Cary Pedicini sampling 'liquid gold' on the Upper Sun Kosi.*



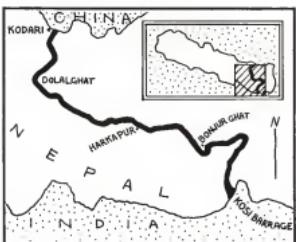
the more serious situation where a paddler was forced to swim. We were all strong, reliable eskimo rollers in normal situations, but the combination of extremely fast, icy cold, aerated and often shallow water greatly tested our rolling skills.

## As the adrenalin rush began to subside I knew I had broken the first barrier.

Failure to roll the first time resulted in nasty swims for John Lockie and Mike Wood that first day - both were forced to retire and repair badly damaged boats in the evening. As we sat contemplating our prospects for the next day I could sense a greater feeling of confidence amongst the expedition. We had tackled some of the most dangerous and technically difficult water most of us had ever experienced and escaped relatively unscathed, with any damage easily repairable.

On the first day the Sun Kosi had provided continuous Grade Four water with some Grade Five sections and only two sections which had been unpaddle-able.

Our confidence, however, was soon to be shattered, as early the next morning the nightmare that haunts every canoeist, to be trapped submerged in your boat, became a reality for leader John Wilde.



From a vantage point in my boat below a difficult Grade Five section I had watched John manoeuvre his kayak through the maze of boulders, chutes, and foaming stoppers above me as he approached the final rock ledge only metres upstream from my boat. Approaching this final drop, John was thrown off course and forced to shoot the ledge to the extreme right-hand side of the river, a passage which even later looked reasonably safe.

The rapid succession of expressions on the face of a man who suddenly realizes that something has gone wrong, that the river has taken charge and he is seconds away from death, remain vividly in my mind.

The bow of John's kayak had jammed beneath a rock at the bottom of this two-metre chute, the tremendous pressure of tons of water holding the rear deck against the ledge and John doubled flat against the front deck of his boat.

Instinct and lightning reflexes enabled John to free himself slightly from the cockpit as the boat began to fold, threatening to trap his legs between hull and deck. Had it not been for the quick thinking of members, Jim Burcide, Steve Edwards, Neil McGilp and Peter Cannan who formed a human chain to reach John Wilde's outstretched hand, the expedition may have ended there.

The incident had shaken us all and it was with great caution and a good deal more respect for the river that five of us continued on that day to complete the stretch as planned, whilst the remainder of the group spent hours trying to retrieve the pieces of the kayak still jammed at the bottom of the river.

John Wilde had been paddling one of six especially prepared 'Sun Kosi Special' kayaks. The remarkable

strength-to-weight ratio achieved in their lay-ups had undoubtedly given him those vital few seconds in which to partially free himself before the enormous hydraulic pressure began to fold his boat.

The Upper Sun Kosi was to continue to challenge us at every turn for the next three days. Tony Jones - director of an outdoor centre in eastern Victoria - had to be taken by jeep to Kathmandu to receive treatment for facial cuts and bruising after capsizing and being dragged upside-down over partially submerged rocks. According to Tony, his experiences in Kathmandu whilst trying to get hospital treatment were more horrendous than his experience on the river! Nevertheless he was back with us on the water within a day as we made the three-kilometre portage around the Lamosang Power Station. This small hydro-electric scheme diverts the waters of the Sun Kosi only temporarily, the river then follows its normal course on to Dolaighat at the confluence with the Indrawati River.

We had now completed the Upper Sun Kosi and so realized one aim of our expedition. In the preceding days we had covered approximately 50 kilometres of previously unpaddled waters, dropping 700 metres in that



**The rapid succession of expressions on the face of a man who is seconds away from death remain vividly in my mind.**



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short distance, at times through sections dropping at the rate of 20 metres a kilometre.

The drama and excitement was filmed by Nomad Film Productions, a Melbourne-based company whose documentary special *River of Gold* is expected to be screened on Australian television shortly.

The camera crews experienced the exhilaration of this massive white water when we reached the Lower Sun Kosi. Here they no longer had the convenience of road and vehicles but followed in the support rafts carrying our supplies and equipment.

In contrast to the Upper river, the Lower Sun Kosi, after a few quiet days, developed into a broad, fast flowing river of flat sections interspersed with massive, exciting rapids. The immense volume of water now gathered in this sacred river produced long stretches of standing waves, stoppers, swirling eddies and the occasional 'surfing wave' which stretched across the river and on which we would 'sit' and play for hours.

Our 'armada' of support rafts and kayaks were an amazing spectacle to the local villagers as we passed by Dumja Besi, Khurkot and Nawalpur, and arrived at Harkapur after four days of relatively quiet paddling. During these days we could relax as we floated down river, occasionally



Deputy leader Cary Pedicini.

The Sun Kosi was no longer a distant unknown quantity, but a startling reality.



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accompanied by troops of langur monkeys with kestrels and osprey hunting overhead. At night children from the villages would visit us, some with their exercise books from school English classes, and we would communicate by written words and improvised sign language.

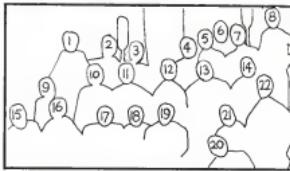
These same villagers were with us the next day, lining the banks, as we prepared to shoot the largest and most impressive rapids of the river, just down-stream from Harkapur Bridge.

Mungalay rapid, named after the first Nepalese to guide a raft through this section, was a succession of huge stoppers ending in a chute perilously close to an undercut ledge, under which a massive back current was swirling, threatening to grab, and never release, any boat that came too close.

After hurtling down the tongue of this massive rapid, at speeds of up to 30 kilometres an hour, I was thrown almost at right angles as I was hit by the backwash off the cliff which towered 100 metres overhead. A succession of exploding waves hit as I powered out of one hole, desperately trying to gather sufficient speed to break through the next. A few momentary glimpses of rocks, sky and foaming water, between passages of complete white-out, were sufficient clues to work out that I was on line as I shot the last drop and glided past the menacing undercut ledge.

For those who successfully negotiated this rapid, once was enough. There were no thoughts of trying it again just for fun, particularly as we had just seen one of the support rafts completely back-looped, catapulting its six occupants and food supplies into the stopper at the bottom of the last drop.

The next four days provided similar adventure with long exciting rapids, any one of which could have entered



*The Expedition: 1 Tony Jones 2 Andy Hall 3 Cary Pedicini 4 Neil McGilp 5 Peter Newman 6 Joel Shelton 7 Eric Ligtermoet 8 Peter Newland 9 Mike Kubo 10 Mike Wood 11 Jim Burcide 12 John Lockie 13 Alex Newton 14 Graham Mitchell 15 Tony Jago 16 Peter Cann 17 Quentin Mitchell 18 Robyn James 19 Steve Edwards 20 John Wille 21 Bill Mason 22 Stuart Wagstaff*

tained us for days. There were standing waves on which we could surf from one side of the river to the other and stoppers into which we could dive and be spat out vertically, air-borne for a few seconds before crashing back to the surface. It is this type of playing around that is the key to the enjoyment of whitewater expedition paddling.

The river was to finish almost as abruptly as it had started for us. As we paddled under the shadow of the Hindu temple at Bhara Chetra and rounded yet another bend in the river, we suddenly broke through the last of the Mahabarata Range and were confronted with a totally flat horizon as the river spread out over the plains on its last few kilometres to the levees of the Sun Kosi's barrage on the Indian border.

We completed this last flat stretch in approximately six hours paddling the next day; plenty of time to recall the events of the previous 14 days in which we had experienced the complete spectrum of whitewater canoeing. From the continuous technical rapids of the upper river to the roller coaster rides of the gigantic lower stretches, the Sun Kosi had given us everything we had hoped for. ●

# W

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'River of Gold', and were selected by the Army Alpine Association to organise and co-ordinate the logistic support for their assault on Ganesh IV (7102 m) in the Nepal Himalaya. Our record of experience and leadership in overseas trekking is unequalled.

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# Untrodden Reserve

John Chapman,  
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on the popular  
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Lake St Clair  
National Park,  
suggests ways to  
have the best  
parts to yourself.

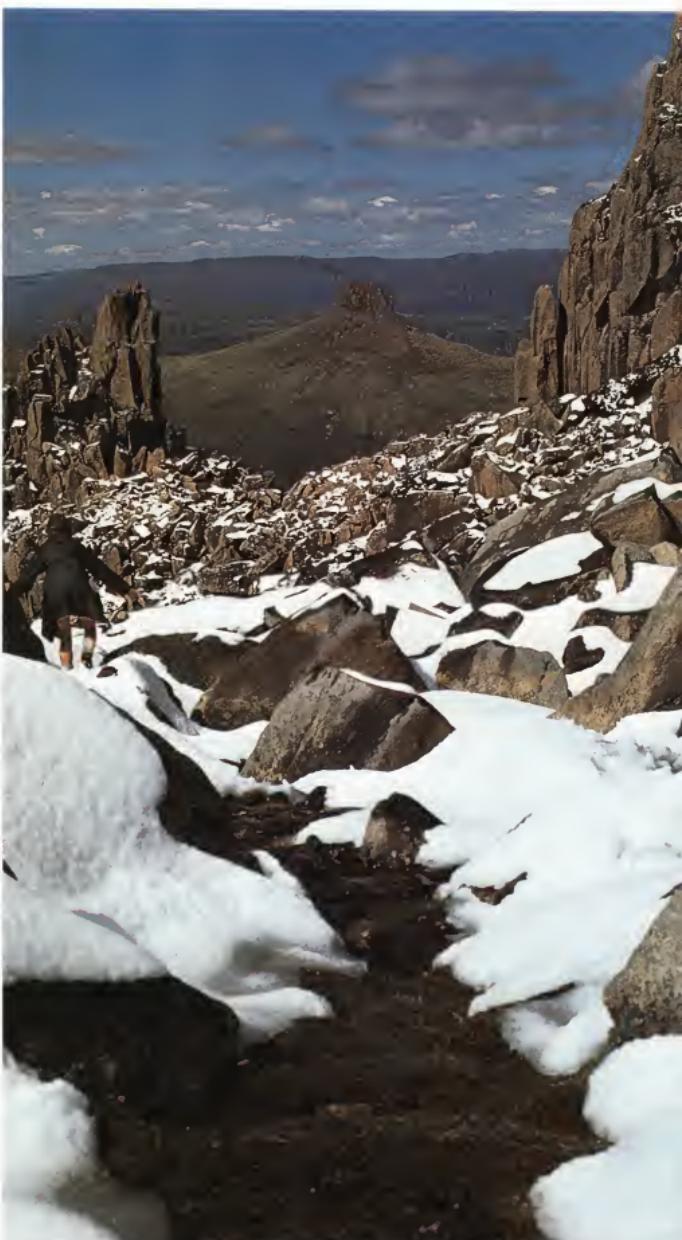
LYING IN THE HEART OF TASMANIA'S mountainous interior, the Cradle Mountain Lake St Clair National Park contains some of the finest wilderness country in Australia. Every year thousands of walkers tramp along the well trodden Overland Track to enjoy some of the delights that this Park has to offer. However, most of these walkers keep to the major tracks and miss seeing many of the less known attractions. Many of these off-track features are easily visited in short sidetrips from the Overland Track, or they can be strung together to form walks in themselves on visits specially planned for that purpose.

The following notes will be found useful when planning a visit to 'the Reserve', a popular name for the Park. Most of the off-track features can be visited as side-trips, varying in length from several hours to two-day trips. It is important to note that much of the Reserve is very exposed to all weathers and that navigation can be difficult in poor visibility, so use good equipment and be prepared to retreat to the easily followed tracks if necessary.

## Cradle Mountain

This, the dominant feature of the north end of the Reserve, is well known and visited by many walkers each year. As the map shows, a maze of tracks take in most of the features with little scope for off-track walking. There are however, some interesting short trips to be made for those who want to see something different. To the east of Cradle Mountain is the well named Hidden Lake. This is best approached by walking from the Scott-Kilvert Hut along the north shore of Lake Hanson. A short climb north-east over the ridges then leads to the lake. The reason for the name is obvious for it nestles deep in a cliff-enclosed bowl hidden from all sides.

*The Pelion Plains. Right, Pelion East from Tasmania's highest peak, Mt Ossa. All photos John Chapman*



The return journey can be made by climbing steeply to the west over the ridge to the Artists Pool.

Another worthwhile trip from the Scott-Kilvert Hut is to climb the hill behind the hut to the Lindon Tarns. The ascent, although short, is steep and rough and the small plateau the tarns lie on is a welcome respite after the scrub. Above are the crags of Cradle Mountain which are reflected in the tarns and below is a magnificent panorama of lakes and valleys. In fine weather, camping here is recommended as the sunrise is magnificent.

West of Cradle Mountain the Little Plateau provides an easy off-track excursion. To get on to the plateau either leave the Overland Track south of Kitchen Hut or climb on to the ridge above Suttons Tarn. The crest of the plateau is open and exposed, and easily crossed. After four kilometres this crest ends abruptly in huge cliffs which fall to the Fury River 800 metres below. Perched high above the sur-

*Mt Hyperion from Pelion East. Below, Walled Mountain reflected in a Labyrinth tarn.*





rounding valleys, the panorama here is outstanding and there are excellent views of Cradle Mountain and Barn Bluff. It is worth camping out on the plateau to see the sunset colours on these two peaks. To return it is necessary to retrace the route across the plateau.

#### Waterfall Valley

This cirque-walled valley forms the southern boundary of the Cradle Mountain massif. The Overland Track passes through the valley high up on the western side and views from the track reveal some of the many waterfalls in the valley below. To visit these, leave the track and follow the creek downstream descending through light scrub. Further down, more falls can be seen cascading over the cliffs. Indeed the valley contains an amazing number of waterfalls.

If time permits continue down until on top of the last main fall. This is the largest in the valley, about 60 metres high, and it is possible to get down the steep southern slopes to its base. Above, cliffs ring the valley with white foam ribbons tumbling from them. The spectacle is best after heavy rainfall. Returning back up the valley, walk up to where the valley floor begins to widen and climb north, away from the creek, up to a series of flat terraces. Here are hidden delights, as amongst the scree and grass will be found some tiny tarns surrounded by fagus and pencil pines. Return to the Overland Track along the terrace.

#### Barn Bluff to Lake Will

As an alternative to the muddy descent into Waterfall Valley this route has much to recommend it. The views are excellent and the walking is challenging enough without being dangerous. If the weather is cloudy, however, the route should be avoided.

Leave the Overland Track on Cradle Cirque and follow the marked walking track to the summit of Barn Bluff. Here the track is left and the south-western ridge of the mountain descended. This drops quickly at first then descends steadily to the knoll called Fury Divide. From here walk south along the shore of Lake Will to the outlet creek and Innes Falls. The falls are worth visiting as they fall into a tight forest-choked gorge, very different to those of Waterfall Valley. A track can be followed from the falls to Lake Holmes, but a quicker and drier route is to walk east from the falls up on to the open ridges and follow these south past some lakes to Lake James. It is a short walk east to rejoin the Overland Track at Lake Windermere.

#### Lakes Ellen and McRae

South of Waterfall Valley the Overland Track rises on to a series of high exposed moors which are bare and

open. The track can be left almost anywhere to walk east to these two lakes. If the track is left soon after Cirque Hut the plateau rim can be followed. This gives good views of Cradle Mountain and Waterfall Valley. In autumn these lakes are particularly beautiful and campsites can be found at Lake McRae. To return to the track, walk south-west over the outlet of Lake Agnew to Lake Windermere or return west to Lake Holmes.

#### West Pelion - Mt Ossa Circuit

In the centre of the Reserve lies a broad amphitheatre ringed with mountains and called the Pelion Plains. The Overland Track hugs close under West Pelion then crosses the edge of these plains and climbs south through Pelion Gap. An exciting alternative to the track is to traverse the ring of mountains. This route is rough as large boulders cap most of the peaks and is recommended only to experienced walkers. At least two days will be required to traverse from West Pelion to Mt Ossa, but it is definitely worth the trip to obtain the fine views of the Reserve.

Start early from an overnight camp at Pelion Creek and follow the signposted side-track towards the summit of West Pelion. Either cross the huge boulders forming the summit or skirt along the base of the huge cliff on the south face of the mountain. Descend from the mountain through the rough saddle below on to the open ridge to the south-west. This is easily followed over Mt Achilles to Leonards Tarn in the saddle between Achilles and Theis. This makes an ideal campsite after a rough day of walking. From here a side-trip can be made to Perrins Bluff. Next morning, clamber over the huge boulders of Mt Theis and descend to the next saddle, traversing the southern slopes of Paddys Nut. Here the Theis Track will be seen, and this is a handy retreat route if the weather has changed. Above towers the huge mass of Mt Ossa, and a long toiling haul up the boulders leads on to the highest point of Tasmania. In fine weather a camp at the tiny lake near the top is highly recommended. The cairned route is easily followed down to the Overland Track at Pelion Gap.

#### Oakleigh Plateau

Towering over the Pelion Plains, Mt Oakleigh is a popular half-day walk from the Overland Track. Many stand on the summit each year but few leave the track to walk east across the open rocky tops. The walking is easy and as you go further east more tarns appear to add their beauty to the panoramas. Reasonable shelter is found beside Warragurra Creek for camping, as well as the small McCoys No 1 Hut, nestled beside a large



# •THE MOUNTAIN DESIGNS STORY•



The story goes back to 1969 when a young Queensland rockclimber called Rick White started a small importing, wholesale and mail-order business for climbers called Infinity Equipment, which soon after was renamed Odin Equipment Company after a local well-known rockclimb. Late in

1972 this expanded from under Rick's house to a small part-time shop, in the Brisbane suburb of Taringa, called Rick's Mountain Shop. Growth forced this shop to bigger premises at Toowong. After leading the first Australian expedition to the Patagonian Andes in southern Argentina in December/January 1974/1975, Rick's energies turned to making the now well established business into a full-time proposition. This led to the birth of Mountain Designs, which was the manufacturing arm of the business, and Rick leaving his job as Technical Officer with the CSIRO. With another local climber/journalist, Mike Meadows, who was between jobs at the time, he began to design and manufacture tents and down sleeping bags. This small outfit set a new standard of design for local bags at the time, similar styles being available only from Europe and the U.S.A. The growth of both the retail and manufacturing arms meant another move, this time to a large basement in Kelvin Grove, where the three companies Odin, Rick's Mountain Shop and Mountain Designs were merged into one, Mountain Experience, while the brand name of Mountain Designs was retained. Within two years the whole operation had outgrown this 'dungeon' and moved to two-storey premises in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley, currently the headquarters of the retailing side, Mountain Experience, and the home of the importing, manufacturing and wholesaling division - now a separate company, Mountain Designs Pty Ltd.

Throughout this time, many local and visiting climbers worked in this climbing business, including Mike Meadows, Rob Staszewski, 'Humzoo', Nic Taylor, 'Eggi' Everett, Chris Peisker, Coral Bowman, Marty Beare, Thelma Wilson, Dave Moss, Brian Springall and not forgetting Vicki Couper, an art teacher who worked on some patterns but whose great contribution was the design of our MD logo!

Mountain Designs products were an instant success, and older more established manufacturers in Australia and New Zealand were eventually forced to upgrade their range and/or materials to meet the new challenge. The success of Mountain Designs spawned several small 'backyard makers' in its wake. All this competition resulted in an overall upgrading of Australian products and an improvement in design, function and quality. We feel proud that Mountain Designs was in fact the prime mover in this.



few not-so-legitimate ones. Litigation proceeded, and finally last year Mountain Designs was awarded damages - a small consolation.

Changes in recent years in retailing in Australia led Mountain Designs to adopt a policy of retailing its own products and imported lines predominantly through its own shops. To this end a second shop was opened, in Sydney, in August 1979. This proved a success, and a third shop was opened, in Melbourne, in May 1981. This direct retailing has the advantage for the consumer of better prices, and a greater ability to make 'specials' and custom-made products for people. The shop policy on prices is to not be undersold by any other specialist retailer in the area. Although we are not in the discount business, Mountain Designs is always determined to offer the best knowledge, service, value and price.

The man behind the Mountain Designs group, Rick White, has a background mainly as a climber. Some of his main achievements are:

- The discovery and development of Frog Buttress and Mt Maroon in Queensland, and over 200 first ascents, 1968-1981.
- The first Australian ascent of El Capitan in Yosemite valley, in 1973.
- The first hammerless ascent of Lord Gumtree on Buffalo's North Wall: one of the hardest aid routes in Australia, in 1976.
- Led the first Australian expedition to the Patagonian Andes in southern Argentina, in 1975.
- Led a subsequent expedition to the same area, in 1979.
- The first unroped solo ascent of Balls Pyramid in one and three-quarter hours, in 1980.
- A member of Doug Scott's Gangotri Himalayan Expedition in 1981.

Rick is also involved with outdoor pursuits and his climbing school Climb High has recently become part of a new company he has formed with Mountain Experience manager Dave Moss, Australian Wilderness Expeditions or 'Wild X'. This company promotes

These formative years were not without their problems. Deliveries were erratic due to demand outstripping production. One of the main problems encountered was some batches of faulty raw materials. This resulted in the replacement of a number of 'leaking' bags. Again we are proud that we stand behind our product guarantee, not an easy task for a small company. We replaced nearly all legitimate claims and a

local climbing trips, expeditions to Balls Pyramid, and represents people like our friends at Adventure Travel, offering Himalayan trekking, camel safaris and balloon expeditions, to mention a few activities. Mountain Designs is not just a business but a life-style and we often incur the wrath of our accountants for not being sufficiently profit motivated.

Some of the many firms in Australia we believe that Mountain Designs can claim include: • First to use the best quality down available, and introduced American downproof nylons. • First to use the superlight (1.5) nylon for exceptionally light bags. • First to make the side zip, box-foot style sleeping bags. • First to use '700 loft' down - the best in the world. • First to make Cordura rucksacks. • First to make down-filled clothing, vests, duvets, etc. • Suppliers to expeditions to places like Patagonia (Andes), Dungari (Himalaya), Peruvian Andes, Gangotri (Himalaya), Changabang (Himalaya), and many others.

Mountain Designs also imports, sells and/or distributes products from: *Alp Sports* clothing and soft-wear, *Beal* and *Edeleid* ropes, *Chouinard* equipment and *Patagonia* softwear. *CMI* figure 8s and ascenders. *Galibier* and *EB* boots, *Interalp* and *Salwea* mountaineering equipment. *Lowe Alpine Systems* - packs and hardware. *SMC* and *Bonatti* karabiners. *Troll* (Whillans) harnesses. *Wild Country* mountaineering equipment.

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Photo Franklin River gorge, by Bob Brown TWS

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*Mt Geryon's soaring 300-metre East Face.*

Pencil Pine forest. Return to the Pelion Plains by following the creek south to the Arm River track and follow that west to the plains.

#### **Lees Plains**

These plains lie south-east of the Pelion Plains deep in the Mersey Valley and provide ideal camping and easy walking. From the Overland Track walk to the east end of Lake Ayr along the Arm River track. Leave this track here and follow a lesser track east past Reedy Lake down to the Mersey River at Lees Hut. The river flats are known as Lees Plains. If you are camping here, Ladder Falls are worth visiting. From the plains a good track can be followed east to a road. Alternatively, the Overland Track can be regained by walking south along the banks of the Mersey River, then climbing up through the forest to the track between Kia-ora and DuCane Huts.

#### **Cathedral Mountain**

This striking mountain towers high over the Overland Track dominating the area around Kia-ora Hut. What will surprise some people is that the top of the mountain is a plateau of rolling hills and lakes with stunted trees straggling across the plateau. It can be reached in a long return day-trip from DuCane Hut. From the Overland Track visit the Fergusson Falls and cross the river on the jammed boulder there, then climb uphill heading left towards Cathedral Creek which can be followed up to the plateau high above. The summit is found to the north, on the other side of the plateau, and is a spectacular block jutting out

from the main cliff. Return via the same route.

#### **Never Never and Junction Lake**

The Never Never is the continuation of the Mersey valley upstream to the Central Plateau. It is possible to do a return walk of two days from DuCane or Windy Ridge Huts, or to use the valley to connect a walk from the Reserve to the Central Plateau. From the Overland Track follow the signposted side track to Hartnett Falls, which are always worth looking at, then leave the tracks and follow the valley upstream. This leads through forest and scrubby plains past the McCoy and Clarke Falls to Junction Lake. After a long day the open plains near the lake make an ideal campsite. If returning to the Reserve, pick up the track leading uphill to Lake Artemis and climb on to the northern edge of the Traveller Range. The views here are excellent, and the range is followed west to a steep rough descent into DuCane Gap where the Overland Track is again met. Alternatively the range could be followed south to Derwent Bridge; this route should take about three days.

#### **DuCane Circuit**

The DuCane Range surrounds a beautiful valley at the southern end of the Reserve called Pine Valley. The range itself is walled with huge cliffs and poised on the clifftops is the series of lakes known as the Labyrinth. The circuit traverses the crest of the range from Falling Mountain to Mt Gould. Leave the Overland Track at DuCane Gap and climb steeply north past the cliffs to the top of Falling



*The climb to the Gould Plateau is heavy going*

Mountain. A long walk on the tops now leads west to the sunken bowl on the top of Mt Massif. Descend into Big Gun Pass and climb to the DuCane Range. Cairned tracks can now be followed south through the complex of lakes (the Labyrinth). Several excellent campsites exist near these lakes. Next day follow the cairned track on to the Parthenon, then plunge south into the scrub and climb off the tracks and over the Minotaur. If the weather is still fine, turn west towards the Guardians and camp beside the lake near the summit. Return to the Minotaur, descend steeply south to the foot of Mt Gould, and traverse the eastern slopes of this mountain to the Gould Plateau. The view from this flat-topped ridge is spectacular, as it juts out high above the valleys. The Gould Plateau track is readily met and followed quickly down to the valley below.

#### **Pine Valley to the Labyrinth**

In addition to the well-marked track that leads from the hut to the Labyrinth there is a route that climbs out of the valley directly to Lake Elysia. In Pine Valley follow the Geryon Campsite track up the valley to the campsite. On the west side of the narrow valley, just past the camp, is a long scree slope. Push through the fagus to the start of this and climb steeply up the loose rock to exit on to the Labyrinth on the north side of Lake Elysia. Campsites are found along the lake shores and the normal track makes a good return route.

Another possibility is to follow Pine Valley past the Geryon Campsite, keeping close to the main creek until the head of the valley is reached. The

route is scrubby in the valley and the final climb out of the valley is steep, but for those who like a challenge this is a good route.

#### Narcissus to Mt Ida

Poised over Lake St Clair, Mt Ida is a very noticeable peak despite its relative lack of height. It can be climbed when traversing the Traveller Range or as a long return day trip from Narcissus Hut. From the hut cross the river at the rapids (about ten minutes walk upstream) and walk along the lake shore south-east. Light forest hugs the shores, providing fairly easy walking. Keep walking past Lake Leura to Ida Bay just west of the peak. From here it is possible to climb the peak. Note that great care is required on the final pinnacled tower. Return by the same route.

#### Mount Manfred to Coal Hill

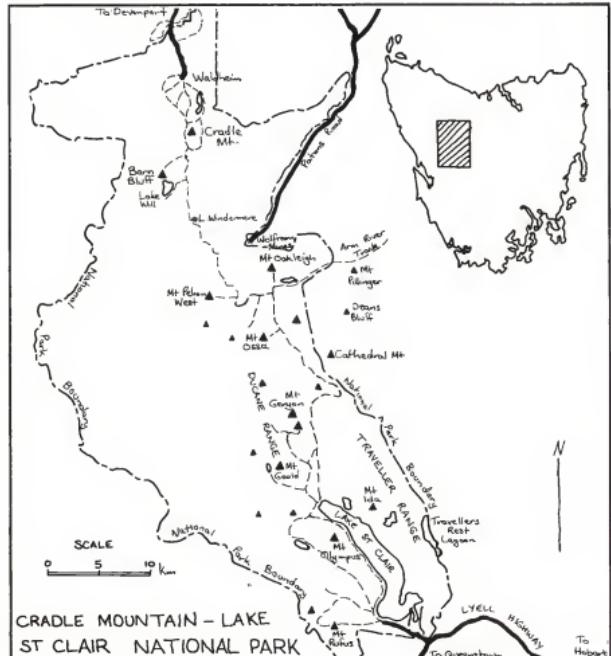
From Pine Valley or Lake Marion this route offers a more challenging alternative to the Byron Gap track. Follow the Lake Marion track until able to cross the lightly scrubbed buttongrass plains to the foot of Mt Manfred. Climb up the steep slopes, then the cliffs, to the rocky tops. From the top follow the scrubby ridge south over Mt Cuver to Coal Hill, then descend east to the plains around Lake Petrarch. Good camping is found at both ends of this lake.

#### Mt Olympus

This mountain towers over the long Lake St Clair on the west, and is worthy of a visit. Camping at the lakes between the two peaks is recommended for the excellent views obtained. From Byron Gap leave the track and climb south-east up the ridge towards the cliffs. Some skirting is necessary to get around small cliffs hidden in the forest; then follow the long ridge on to the plateau on the north summit of the mountain. Cross this and descend east down the ridge which curves to the foot of Lake Enome. The other lake is worth visiting too. From the lakes, the easiest descent is to cross the ridge in the saddle between the two peaks and descend the recently bushfire ravaged south-western slopes to the Cuver Valley.

#### Mt Hugel

This mountain stands above the day-walk circuit track that is to the west of Cynthia Bay. The peak can be climbed from the saddle between Mt Rufus and Mt Hugel. Steep scrambling up screes through the cliff faces leads to the top. The view is excellent; to the west is the Cheyne Range and below to the east are the Hugel Lakes. A circuit can be made by following the plateau north from the summit for two kilometres, then turning east to follow the ridge to Little Hugel. From here a track leads down to Forgotten Lake. ●



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## Wild Interview



# Geoff Mosley

A revealing interview  
with the Director of the  
Australian Conservation  
Foundation,  
by Geoff Schirmer.

• **The obvious question is... how did you get involved in conservation?**

I suppose I first heard about conservationists when my father came home from work at a local gritstone quarry in the British Peak District and told stories of having to smear mud over the fresh marks in the quarries in order to hide the scars from view.

I grew up as a boy in the Peak District, just at the time that it became Britain's first National Park. If it hadn't been for this Park the area would have been swallowed up by the expansion of Sheffield and Manchester. Within 60 miles of the Park there were 25 million people. The benefits of conservation were driven home to me as I saw the efforts that were made to reconcile conflicting pressures between the settled areas - villages, primary industry, quarrying - and the need to preserve the remaining mountain and moorland area of the Peak District. I became a student of conservation and later wrote my Master's thesis on the National Park Movement.

Of course conservationists were regarded with great alarm and suspicion by the local people. They were seen as a threat to livelihood. There is an obvious parallel between this reaction and the reactions of many people today. However, the real threat then, and now, did not come from conservationists. It lay in the prevailing market situation. On the floors of the gritstone quarries were vast numbers of millstones, either completed or partly completed. They were unsold because France had entered the market at that time.

I might also add that if you check the cemeteries in this area you will find the graves of many people who died an early death from silicosis, the result of constant exposure to silica as they shaped the stones.

**And I guess that with the beautiful Peak District around you... this is where you also became involved in walking?**

Yes. I had a cousin who was a farmer, who also loved the countryside

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Geoff Mosley with his children John, Doone and Bridie. Photos Mosley collection

and took me on many walks. These trips were supposed to be for the purpose of looking at farms that were for sale, but I suspect that the real purpose was to enjoy the country. We did a tremendous amount of walking, including trips to Wales.

Actually, I was what one might call a professional walker as a boy. We were paid to act as beaters on the grouse moors. This involved driving grouse towards the shooters' butts on beats that were usually five to six miles long. We did this four or five times a day. It not only developed one's stamina and ability to cover ground at a good pace but it also led us all over the wild moors.

I suppose I had a very fortunate boyhood. I particularly enjoyed the many opportunities to be alone on the moors. During holidays I used to work alone for long periods of time repairing butts in remote areas. It was here that I developed an interest in solo walking that is still very strong. We learnt how to survive on our own, at times in bad weather, with the minimum of protection.

#### After the Peak District did you travel further afield?

Whilst studying at the University of Nottingham I had opportunities to travel on trawlers to the North Sea. A party of us did some exploring in Lapland which involved a bit of low-key mountaineering . . . coming to terms with snow and ice . . . nothing very grand, but still very interesting.

I also made quite a few trips to Scotland where I further extended the interest in solo walking. I've spent a few nights sheltering under stones in the Cairngorms.

#### What circumstances brought you to Australia?

I planned to travel to Canada, New Zealand and Australia and then return to England.

In Canada I worked for a summer as supervisor of the Rocky Mountain chain of Youth Hostels at Banff and Jasper National Parks. This provided opportunities for some walking, and also a trip to Alaska.

In New Zealand I worked for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning as a geographer. This involved regional survey work and writing up reports, which was a valuable training for my later work. I joined the Tararua Tramping Club, a very active club with 600-

800 members based at Wellington. It had an extensive walking programme, especially its Christmas walks, as well as search and rescue activities and mountaineering training. I had a few trips to the South Island – to the Rees and Dart areas, and also climbed Mt Earnslaw.

In 1960 I took up a scholarship in the Geography Department at the Australian National University, Canberra. In the course of research the idea developed of using Tasmania as a place where one could study community interest in nature and the land for recreational purposes, and how this affected conservation. There was a special interest in the inter-play between the tourist industry and local recreational demands.

During the period of 15 months in Tasmania some 25,000 miles were covered, and not a few of them on foot! One memorable experience was a winter ascent of Frenchman's Cap, with a party of doctors. Between us we had one ice axe and a pair of crampons.

Back in Canberra I helped to resurrect the Canberra Bushwalking Club. They made me their first Honorary Life Member for that, which is very pleasing.

#### Are there any particular experiences, or 'epics' that you recall?

There was a trip we made into the Deua region in order to get to the top of a mountain known as Mother Woila, an area in which there had been very little activity. Due to various circumstances we were without water from Friday night to Sunday morning, and on Saturday night were hit by one of the fiercest storms I've ever known, a dry wind storm, of all things, that further added to our discomfort by sending large trees crashing to the ground all around us.

On another trip we were caught out overnight on the Townsend Spur leading up to Kosciusko. Although it was only April we were caught in snow up to our knees, and had to spend a very uncomfortable night in the open on this exposed ridge. There was a similar experience on the Cobberas, this time with my children. We spent a night out in bad weather – we put the children together, two to a sleeping bag. I suppose it was a pretty rugged experience, but they weren't any the worse for it.

"We each thought camp was a different direction..."



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**I was going to ask you about the involvement of your family in bushwalking.**

They've certainly all had a good taste of the bush and continue to enjoy it. Last January I walked in the Western Arthurs with my son John, and my two daughters enjoy cross country skiing. I sometimes wonder if I pushed them too hard in the early years, yet it doesn't seem to have dampened their interest.

I well remember a walk I did one day with my son Robin, who was four at the time. We walked 16 miles from the back of Fall's Creek through Big River to Cleve Cole Hut on Bogong. Of course I gave him a lift or two but he still did a great amount of the trip on his own legs. I can still see the faces of a few hardened bush types at Cleve Cole that night, when little Robin walked in at 8.30, stick in hand and cap firmly set.

**I'll certainly recount that the next time I'm at Cleve Cole. You are obviously keen that children be given a chance to experience the bush at an early age.**

Oh yes. It's such a delight for children to experience the freedom and challenge of the bush, especially when you camp with them in one spot for a couple of days so that they have a good chance to explore the area - to play in mountain streams. It is good for the adults too. There is much to be learnt from watching a child enjoy the bush.

I very much want to make a point here, at the expense of those 'four wheel drive people' who claim that they need this type of vehicle in order to allow their children the experience of real wilderness. For one thing, these children usually don't get far away from the vehicles and the scars they leave in the bush. I would also argue that children can walk into the bush at an earlier age than most people think. They are not as fragile as they are made out to be. They can easily walk into wilderness areas, in the company of thoughtful adults.

**Moving back to the subject of conservation, when did you get involved with conservation in Australia?**

When I came to Australia in 1960 I joined the National Parks Associations of NSW and Victoria. Later I became involved in the Conservation Foundation, through Francis Radcliffe, its founder. He was a very sensitive entomologist with whom I had already corresponded.

I gradually became more involved with the Foundation. In 1966, with the assistance of the Foundation, I taught the first year-long course in Australia on the Conservation of Natural Resources, at the ANU. In 1968 I began full-time work with the Foundation, and in 1973 I became its Director.

**What do you see as the most**

**urgent areas in need of attention now?**

There are two broad areas.

The first of these could be called the need to defend our heritage. It involves a reaction to those developments and trends in society that threaten to eliminate the diversity of our natural areas. Our approach is to define areas that are of the highest importance; Fraser Island, the Great Barrier Reef, South-west Tasmania, Western Arnhem Land and so on.

We see an urgent need not just to defend our wilderness for the sake of recreational use now, or in the future. Our primary concern is to defend wilderness so that it will continue to exist. Antarctica is a good example of this need. We would contend that it should be kept as wilderness, to serve the common interests of man as wilderness. 'Progress' is not to see how many minerals and natural resources we can rip out of it. Progress would be to decide to leave it as it is.

However, as we continue to fight, we recognise that the real problem lies in the area of the broad motivations of society, in the socio-economic systems in which we live. This is our second area of broad concern. Our approach here is to present alternatives, to suggest ways in which the long-term relationship between people and the environment can be more harmonious, self-sustaining, and less destructive.

The biggest threat is the prevailing concept of 'growth'. We are not even at first base until we can present an alternative to the current ethic, which is to get as much as we can out of the environment - dig it up, ship it out - and thus bring 'growth' and 'strength' to Australia.

The great danger lies in the notion that we will need to grow at 'x' rate per year, that we will have to go on increasing our consumption into the future as though this is the only way there is. So we simply continue to set targets - everything gives way to meeting growth targets which themselves keep growing - and so we rip even more energy out of the ground. The sensible alternative is surely to modify the targets.

**Are you pessimistic about the outcome?**

Yes. Unless society changes its objectives to one of 'plateauing-off' as it were, we are always going to be in a more precarious situation - demanding more out of the environment, to the point of exhaustion - and then what happens? We are gradually working ourselves out on a limb. Every step we take in building up our industry places us in a more precarious position.

And that of course involves us in Australia's relationships with the Third World. Through exports we are gradually becoming 'locked-in' with



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countries that are not trying to replace non-renewable resources with renewable resources. They, and we, are becoming more dependent on non-renewable resources, whilst at the same time using up renewable resources to the point of extinction or exhaustion. Our rain forests are an example. We are rapidly depleting this capital, which has been built up over thousands of years.

**How successful has the Foundation been in countering these threats?**

We have raised a voice and we have been heard. However, we have found it difficult as a Foundation to develop comprehensive alternative approaches. We have tended to deal with the situation in terms of our opinions in relation to a number of different resources - our opinion on forests, our opinion on soil, our opinion on water, on the export of minerals, on immigration, and so on.

We haven't developed any policy which ties all these things together under the heading of, let's say, 'the Conserver Society'. What would a 'Conserver Society' be like? In what ways would it be a better form of society?

An important step in this direction has come in the form of the *World Conservation Strategy*, produced by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. It was launched, as simultaneously as possible, in over 30 countries on 6 March, 1980. In Australia it is significant that it was welcomed by all State Governments as well as the Commonwealth. This document presents a vital opportunity for all parties to examine the premises on which we plan our lives - and to allocate responsibility for different facets of the environment to appropriate bodies, federal, state, national, regional and local.

(Copies of the *World Conservation Strategy* - \$A20 including post - and the popular paperback version of it *How to Save the World* - \$A8.50 including post - are available from World Wildlife Fund Australia, GPO Box 528, Sydney 2001. Phone (02) 29 1602).

**How much, in fact, do conservationists have the ear of politicians?**

It is important to have organisations such as ours to provide information about conservation, and to put the case for conservation to both the public and politicians. To promote the long-term consideration, when so many powerful forces are promoting the short-term interests.

However, we are often misunderstood. A lot of people deliberately paint a picture of us as extremists. This is unjust and irresponsible.

The average politician appreciates our submissions, but what worries



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me is that we get 'short-shrift' once the powerful short-term-interest lobbyists get the ears of Government.

There is also a danger that as Australia becomes more fanatical about so-called 'resources development', and as foreign capital becomes more important, not only do politicians tend to lose their independent voice, but one of the other likely casualties is that groups like ours gradually lose their freedom of expression, in the sense that they are deprived of significant avenues through which to express an effective opinion.

It is significant that the annual Commonwealth Government funding for the Conservation Foundation is, in real terms, a quarter of what it was in 1972. Then we received \$150,000. Now we receive \$75,000.

Fortunately, however, the community has stepped in. We receive valuable support through donations, and through our membership, of 10,000. On the other hand there is a gross discrepancy between public concern and support for conservation and Government recognition. Conservation ranks very low in the order of Government Ministries.

The media also needs to wake up. Eight years ago we had frequent coverage. Now it is much less, despite the fact that public opinion polls show a sustained interest in conservation.

#### What can the average bush-walker do?

One of the problems we have in Australia is that because of the great distances that separate us we can easily become divided into parochial groups with esoteric concerns.

I strongly suggest that people with a love of the natural resources of this great country join a local conservation body. There are about 1300 in Australia. Many bodies would benefit from donations to help them sustain a desperate fight – for example those who are fighting to defend the rain forests.

I would also suggest that people join and support the Australian Conservation Foundation. We can speak for people in places where their single voice would never be heard.

And please don't underestimate the value of writing to your local Members. A positive letter in which you express appreciation for the work of conservation groups, and indicate your support, would hopefully counter a lot of the bad-mouthing that occurs.

As we left his office I invited Geoff to join a cross country ski trip to the Mt Nelse area. Having indicated that he would see if he could fit it into his programme, he said: 'Yes, I see that even Nelse is under threat for ski-resort development. You can never stop fighting in conservation. There's always another battle.' •

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## Jutta Hosel

*Sand dune near Cape Otway, Victoria. Opposite, on Mt Wellington, Tasmania.*



# Tents for Ski Touring

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Tents considered to be mainly bush-

walking tents are not included in the survey. Some, such as the Diamond Free Spirit and Eureka Timberline, are considered to be marginal inclusions as ski touring tents.

All tents in the survey are double-skin tents. Gore-tex tents are not included because of their limitations in temperatures below -5°C.

Some points of explanation: • Points for roominess are allocated with regard to each tent's floor area, height and shape of wall. • Points for ease of pitching are allocated assuming adverse weather conditions. In good conditions most tents would score better. • Ability to shed snow is not as important as stability because windy conditions are usually encountered in our snow regions. • Recommended retail prices and availability vary between states but most specialist shops stock two or three brands. Some prices will apply for longer than others.

The 'value' rating is therefore not permanent and is only relative at the time of the survey. We feel, however, that all tents mentioned in the survey are of top quality in their respective price ranges and as such are good value.

• All poles are shock-corded. **AA** aluminium alloy. **AWn** awning over door. **DD** double doors. **Cv** corresponding vents. **Fg** fibreglass. **geo** geodesic. **Hv** hooded vents. **Iopt** inner and outer pitch together. **IV** inner tent vents. **Sp** storage pockets. **Sv** snow valance. Qualitative assessment: the more dots the better.

	Shape	Per- sons	Max Inside LxWxH cm	Wgt kg	Colour inner●	Poles	Peg Points	Features	Vestibule	Room- iness	Ease of pitching	Stability	Snow shedding	Quality	Value	RR Price	
<b>Bergans</b> Norway																	
Ignell 2	Hoop	2	210x155x96	2.6	Fawn●green	2xFg	4-12	Hv/Iopt		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$295	
Ignell 3	Modified hoop	3	210x200x125	3.4	Yellow●green	3xFg	6-10	Hv/Iopt		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$410	
Tunnel 2	Xridge tunnel	2	220x120x105	3.2	Fawn●green	2xFg	8-22	Hv/Iopt		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$335	
Tunnel 3	Xridge tunnel	3	210x170x100	3.4	Fawn●green	2xFg	8-22	Hv/Iopt		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$370	
<b>Diamond</b> USA																	
Free Spirit 2	2xA+ridge	2/3	210x150x99	3.37	White●green	Aa	4-10	Awn/Bs/Sv		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$235	
Super Spirit	2xA+ridge	2/3	244x150x99	3.8	Navy/white●beige	Aa	4-10	Awn/Bs/Dd/Sv		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$265	
NIC Dome	Hex dome	2/3	250x217x127	3.85	Rust/white●beige	3xAAa	12	Bs/Dd/Sv		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$410	
Dome	Hex geo dome	2/3	250x206x127	4.25	Brown/white●beige	4xAAa	6-12	2xAwn/Bs/Dd/Sv		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$475	
<b>Eureka</b> USA																	
Timberline 2	2xA+ridge	2/3	218x159x107	3.12	Sand●green	Aa	4-10	Sv		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$230	
6th Dimension Special	Hex dome	2/3	236x213x132	3.03	Sand●green	3xAAa	11	Sv		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$330	
Cedars 2	Tunnel	2/3	244x210x109	3.18	Sand/caramel	3xAAa	10-16	Dd/Sv		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$356	
Sentinel	2xA+ridge+mid hoop	2/3	244x210x117	3.35	Tan	AaAa	2-8	Dd/Sv		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$405	
<b>Jansport</b> USA																	
Traldome	Hex dome	2/3	254x220x127	3.35	White●blue	3xFg	6-12	Awn/Sv		●	●	●	●	●	●	\$456	
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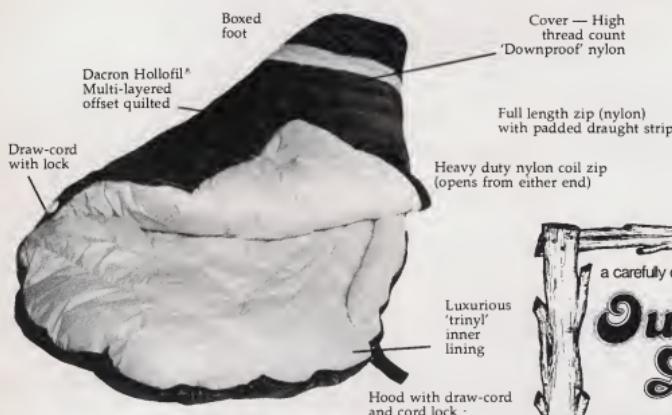
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**Compass Points.** Silva has added two more models to its extensive range of lightweight compasses available in Australia. The Type 24W is a mini-wrist model priced at about \$12 and designed for the casual week-end walker. The Type 50 is a sighting compass that costs less than \$50, yet it is said to give 'prismatic accuracy' without the weight of a prismatic compass.



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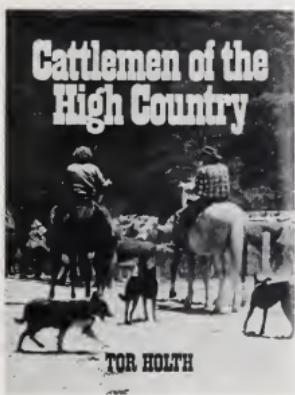
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# Reviews



**Cattlemen of the High Country**  
by Tor Holth with Jane Barnaby (Rigby, 1980. Reprinted 1981. RRP \$19.95).

**Cattlemen and Huts of the High Plains** by Harry Stephenson (Graphic Books, 1980. Reprinted 1981. RRP \$17.50).

Among bushwalkers, the question of cattle grazing in alpine areas is often controversial. But the cattlemen have built up a folklore and lifestyle that is rich and fascinating: their contribution by way of huts, place names and historical incident has become an important part of the high country of Victoria and New South Wales.

Tor Holth's book confines itself to the story of the cattlemen of the Bogongs – an area in the Victorian Alps that includes the State's highest peaks and the extensive snowfields of the Bogong High Plains.

The book, now in its first reprint, is clearly the result of intensive research. The description of the characters of the High Plains is excellent, and complete with verbatim recollections by the old-timers themselves. Promising as this pattern may appear, there is perhaps too much of a good thing: the lengthy quotes from cattlemen are at times tedious and confusing, and more careful editing would have added real spice. The end result is a little disappointing.

Holth is fascinated by the men of the high country, and there is a sense of poetry in his understanding of the way they relate to the 'bitter-sweet

Bogongs'. His sympathies extend to the view that cattlemen are 'conserving the beauty of the high country for all' – a position that would bring a mixed reception from walkers.

Expensively produced, Holth's book has several mouth-watering colour plates, but its lack of index is an unfortunate omission for a potential reference work. The absence of a worthwhile map is even more inexplicable.

Harry Stephenson's book is very different, despite the similarity of title. He deals with many areas in the Alps, from Lake Mountain (near Melbourne) to Mt Kosciusko in New South Wales. The book has sold well and is already in its second reprint.

Sadly, Stephenson's book suffers from some amateurish maps, poor reproduction of photos (even considering their age) and eccentric layout.

But for all this, the book is a rough-hewn block of history and anecdote, full of character and charm. Stephenson is a bushwalker of the old school and although the book is based on careful research, you get the impression that he himself is part of the story, engaging in the humour of the yarn and the drama of the mountain muster.

More than a catalogue of family histories, the text wanders through early exploration of the Alps as well as ski touring epics such as those of Cleve Cole, an experienced skier who died on Mt Bogong in 1936, and Seaman, the American who perished on Mt Kosciusko in 1929. There is a detailed account of all that is known of the Wonnangatta murder mystery, involving the death in 1917 of the manager and cook of the remote Wonnangatta Station in the heart of the Victorian Alps. Stephenson also writes of the 'Man from Snowy River', Jack Riley, and captures the laconic humour and ingenuity of the men of the mountains.

A canny bushman, Stephenson carefully avoids commenting on the virtues or otherwise of grazing in the Alps.

For the bushwalker and ski tourer there is a wealth of authoritative background information in Stephenson's book and a host of inspirations for new trips.

Stephenson's book is generally well-researched and thoroughly readable. It might look less impressive

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than Holth's on the coffee table, but it is full of human interest and a warm appreciation of the ethos of the Alps which Holth never quite achieves.

Brian Walters

**100 Walks in Northern Queensland**  
by Brian Mackness (Hill of Content, 1980. RRP \$5.95).

**100 Walks in South Queensland**  
by Tony Groom and Trevor Gynther (Hill of Content, 1980. Reprinted 1981. RRP \$5.95).

These books follow Hill of Content walking guides published for some southern states. Both are modestly priced and compact enough to be carried in a pack.

Brian Mackness's book on northern Queensland walks appears to be mainly written for beginners, and contains many helpful tips in the introductory pages.

There are 36 maps, but these are of limited value: there is no indication of scale, labelling is inadequate and some lack even a north point. The cross referencing between maps and text is sufficiently confusing to waste time.

There is a wide range of walks, but although the walks along city streets are perhaps understandable, the underwater walk (complete with requirement for flippers and snorkel) seems to stretch the subject matter a bit far. No (other) walks are described off tracks.

The author is a ranger with the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, and sprinkles the text with information about bird, plant, insect and animal life, as well as geology and history.

The walks are well-described, with details as to distance, estimated time, and gradings of easy, medium and hard.

The South Queensland book by Tony Groom and Trevor Gynther is in its first reprint. The areas covered include Lamington National Park, Islands of Moreton Bay, the Scenic Rim (the crest of mountains curving around Brisbane at about a 100-kilometre radius) and many others. There is a good variety.

Again the maps are disappointing, as they are poorly set out and not to scale.

The introductory pages are thorough and the section on 'good house-keeping habits' for walkers is particularly good. Well worth noting are the list of addresses and the bibliography at the end of the book.

Walks are graded carefully, with outings to suit the family or the more ambitious epic-hunter. The routes include estimates of time and distance, as well as advice on maps, transport and water points.

Brian Walters

# Wildfire

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection of them will be published in this column in future issues. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Write today to the Editor *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.

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**Cross country skiers.** The Winter Group is a social cross country ski club which meets on the second Tuesday of each month during winter at the Australian Conservation Foundation, 1st floor 672B Glenferrie Rd, Glenferrie, at 7.30 p.m. Meetings are very informal and usually include films and guest speakers on XC skiing, mountaineering and other winter alpine activities. We also organise parties, camps and barbeques, so come along and check us out!

**The River Canoe Club of NSW** is the oldest canoe club in Australia. Club activities include white water touring, slalom (competition at state and international level), canoe polo, marathon, down river racing and surf canoeing. On the quieter side, the club holds picnic paddles and other social events throughout the year. Club House address - Richardson Crescent, Tempe, Sydney. Postal address - GPO Box 2192, Sydney 2001.

**The Victorian Climbing Club** meets at 8 pm on the last Thursday of each month (except December) at 188 Gatehouse St, Parkville 3052. Visitors and new members interested in rock-climbing are welcome. Contact the Secretary, GPO Box 1725P, Melbourne Victoria 3001.

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If you want quality outdoor equipment ask for **Sigg** no leak fuel and water bottles and aluminium ware, **Edelrid** and **SMC** climbing gear, **Mariani** Beef jerky, **Mountain Equipment** sleeping bags, **Brixia** mountain boots, **Typhoon** foul weather clothing, **CLIMAX** sleeping bags, rucksacks, wool jackets, map cases and camping gear. Ask your favourite retailer or write for the name of your nearest stockist from the distributors **Australian Mountain Merchants** Pty Ltd. 4 Racing Club Lane Melbourne 3000 Telex AA30625 Telephone (03) 67 7966



# ONE STOP SHOPPING FOR ALL RUCKSACK SPORTS



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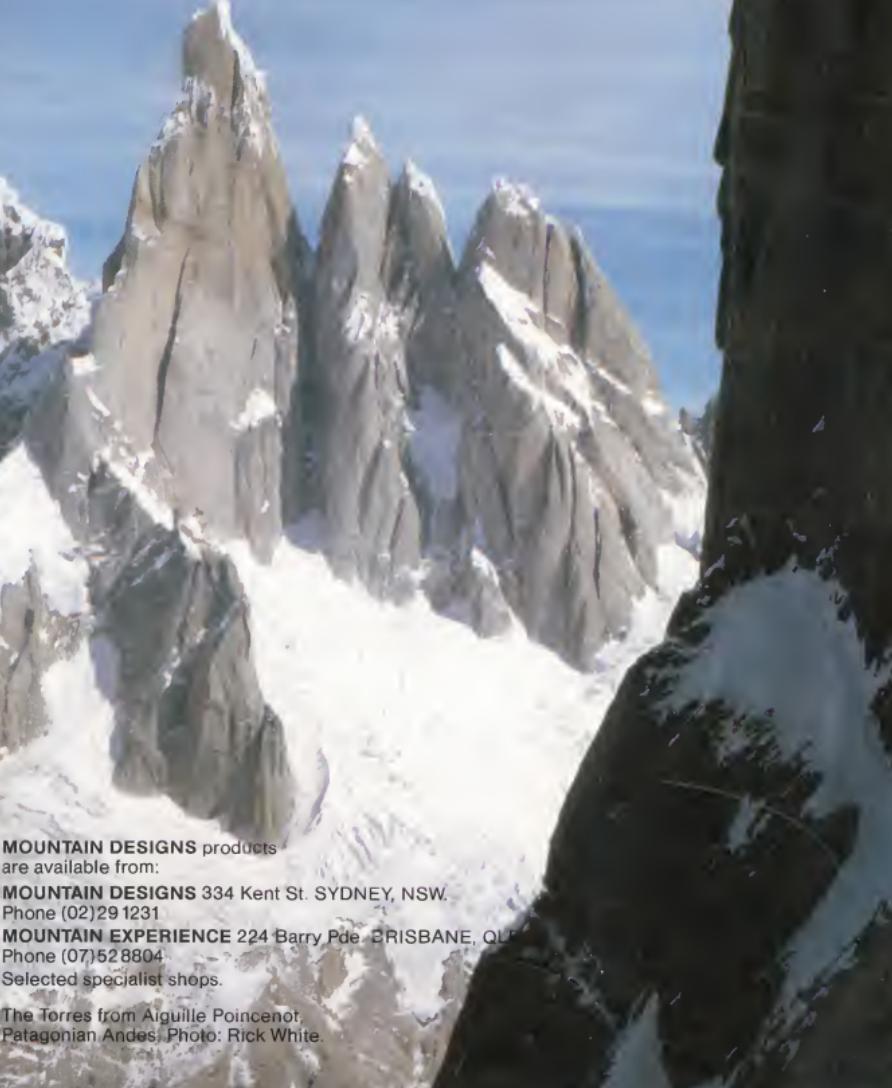
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## MOUNTAIN DESIGNS

Wilderness Equipment Manufacturers



**MOUNTAIN DESIGNS** products  
are available from:

**MOUNTAIN DESIGNS** 334 Kent St. SYDNEY, NSW.  
Phone (02) 291231

**MOUNTAIN EXPERIENCE** 224 Barry Pde. BRISBANE, QLD.  
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Selected specialist shops.

The Torres from Aiguille Poincenot,  
Patagonian Andes. Photo: Rick White.